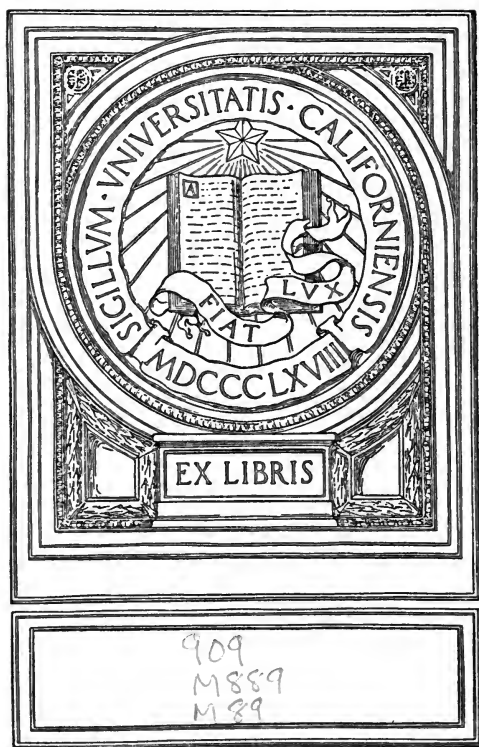


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SIXTY YEARS' STAGE SERVICE, BEING A RECORD OF THE

LIFE OF CHARLES MORTON, • •

• • "THE FATHER OF THE HALLS."



COMPILED BY

W. H. MORTON AND H. CHANCE NEWTON.



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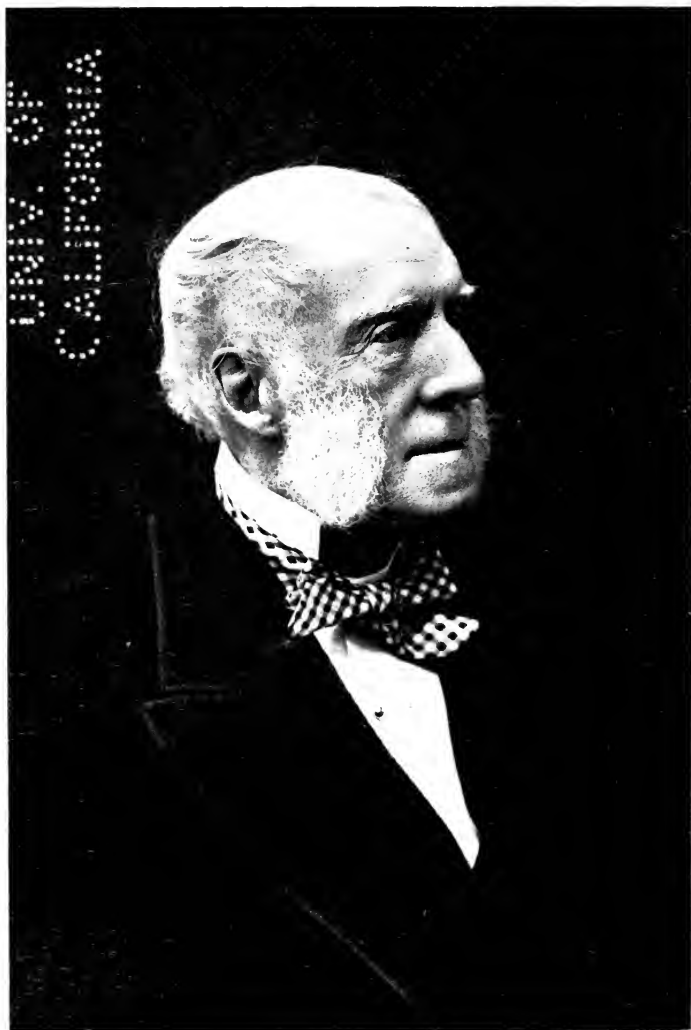


Photo Langlier

CHARLES MORTON.

23a, Old Bond Street.

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TO THE READER.

[*As Mr. Charles Morton prepared this preface not long before his death we have thought it best to let it stand exactly as he wrote it.*]

THERE are few things more difficult to write and make interesting than prefaces. Most people skip them altogether ; few are noteworthy ; none are remembered ; and, indeed, the once hallowed custom of writing them at all is dying out. I, however, as part and parcel of a past age, although still very much alive to-day, feel that I ought to keep the good old tradition green, and so I venture on asking you to read this story of my life, culled from personal data, and jotted down at short intervals during the few periods of leisure I have enjoyed.

My career, if it cannot claim more than the ordinary amount of excitement inseparable from its type, has at least been full of episode, and if it has been a longer one than most of my contemporaries, I attribute that mainly to a strenuous love of work and a temperance of habit, both birth-inherited gifts.

It goes without saying that during my long life I have come in contact with many illustrious and distinguished people, both in and out of the entertainment profession ; and, if I have not dealt at length in some reminiscences which might interest the snapper-up of anecdotes, it has been principally because, to my mind, digressions on matters which have not seriously influenced a life, should have little or no prominence in a simple biography.

To my dear brother William, who has always been an ardent collector of facts concerning my various business ventures, I tender my thanks for his help in this narration of my public services, and to Mr. H. Chance Newton I am also greatly indebted for the trouble he has taken in the preparation of this volume for the press.

Long past the Psalmist's life-limit, I yet feel as though the pith and marrow of my intelligence, and the discriminating faculty of catering for the million, show no trace of waning power, and although I may scarcely dare to hope that my biographers will, in any future edition, be able to add much to what has been written herein, I feel as though the final chapter were farther off now than I could have reasonably supposed it to be twenty years ago.

During the course of a long life, spent almost entirely in the service of the public, it has often occurred to me that some of the experiences and scenes I have passed through might prove of interest not only to those whose tastes are devoted to a lighter form of Vaudeville Entertainment, but to the casual skimmer of contemporaneous history.

Gradually the idea took root and assumed concrete form; my memory enabling me to assist my brother William in a rough and ready compilation, which has been polished and crystallised by the fluent pen of Mr. Chance Newton into the volume which I, to-day, give to the world, with the trepidation natural to a first serious effort in book-making.

Should the perusal of my more or less chequered career result in some shipwrecked brother seeing my footprints on Time's sands, and so take heart again, its publication will not have been entirely in vain.

In the meanwhile, I feel that as I am myself living on borrowed time, I must not trespass upon yours too long, or you will find the preface wearying, and so pre-judge the book to its detriment.

Besides, men are apt to grow so prolix at eighty-four, and so—Farewell.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES MORTON.

SIXTY YEARS' STAGE SERVICE

OR THE

"FATHER OF THE HALLS."

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

IT was in the ancient and accepted Borough of Hackney, still full of quaint and interesting old nooks and corners, that Charles Morton was born on August 15th, 1819. Of his school days there is nothing to relate, save that he was ever a plodder, for very early he forsook the pedagogic sway and "went out to work," as the saying is. Even at this youthful period his blitheness, which always remained with him, was tempered by a business-like air which made him trusted by the most grave and reverend signors of commerce. Like most others who are compelled to seek their own livelihood early in life, young Morton soon met with many a rebuff, which caused him to remark with his even then favourite bard "Ay, There's the Rub!" But while remembering with that author that "Lowliness is Young Ambition's Ladder," he also took heed to watch, while in his green youth, for that tide, the flood of which leads to fortune.

This future impresario's first visit to the play, on his own account, was made when he was scarcely in his teens. The playhouse he selected was the Pavilion, in Whitechapel, a theatre which, under the skilful direction of that artistic "producer" Mr. Isaac Cohen, for some

years past has been called "The Drury Lane of the East." At the time when Charles Morton became a patron of this theatre it was then a very new addition to the amusement temples of London, and was, of late, a favourite resort of the sons and daughters of Israel. The Gentiles who patronised the Pavilion included large numbers of jolly Jack Tars. To meet the natural playgoing demands of these sea-rovers, the management took care that the programmes should comprise such popular nautical dramas as "A Wreck Ashore," "The Lost Ship," "The Mutiny at the Nore," "Red Rover," "Ben Bolt," "The Pilot" (with its fine Long Tom Coffin character), "Tom Bowling," "Tom Cringle's Log," "Luke the Labourer," and "My Poll and my Partner Joe" (both strong favourites in the East End), and of course "Black Eyed Susan." The last named drama of Douglas Jerrold's started its then phenomenal run at the Surrey in the year in which this first Pavilion was opened, namely, in 1829.

Little boy Charles's second playgoing experience was at the old Garrick Theatre, in Leman Street, White-chapel. This cheap and somewhat eccentric playhouse will no doubt be chiefly celebrated in future ages, for the not generally known fact that a few years before its demolition, Mr. Beerbohm Tree made his professional debut there. At the old Garrick Theatre young Charles saw his first tragedy. This was "Damon and Pythias," written by the Irish bards Banim and Sheil, for Macready, who in due course became the youthful Morton's favourite tragedian. The two name-parts in this Hibernian-made Greek play, were played respectively at the Garrick by those popular actors of the then so called "minor" theatres, Charles Freear, a very powerful elocutionist, and William Gomersal, who was so long popular for his realistic impersonation of the late unlamented Napoleon I.

It was at these East End theatres and saloons whereat one found in those days all kinds of comic songs (mostly of the coarsest nature) and sundry burlettas, the "sketches" of the period, together with an occasional call at some out-of-the-way "sing song," that the future "Father of the Halls" became imbued with the notion of becoming himself an entertainment provider. But like the Villains at the "Vic" and at other sanguifuminous playhouses, Morton muttered "Ha! Ha! I will bide my time!"

It will be seen, however, from the ensuing chapter, that he did not "bide" it long. Hardly had his afore-said teens ended when he made a start. In the meantime he also sought what chances offered of hearing the highest of the high-class singers of his early days. He was especially fond of listening to the renowned cantatrice Jenny Lind. For the privilege of hearing such songsters, and watching such famous Thespians as Macready, Helen Faucit, Ellen Tree (afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean), and so forth, this intense young enthusiast would wait for hours and hours outside gallery and pit doors.

One may well wonder whether in those early days, the cheery but never cheeky young Charles ever had visions of the time when crowds would wait patiently outside his own theatre, and variety theatre doors, and then be—as he often was—sent seatless away.



CHAPTER II.

HIS FIRST BUSINESS VENTURE.

Charles Morton's first essay in the public service was at a sort of establishment which members of the Force always prefer to call "Licensed Premises," in short, a public-house. Thus, while scarcely in his majority, he not only became a Benedict but also a Boniface. In other words, he married and settled down, and became proprietor of the St. George's Tavern in Belgrave Road, Pimlico. At this hostelry he soon started what was then described as a "Free and Easy." This was a concert room for "Gentlemen only." Hither would the toilers from the neighbouring factories flock in their hundreds and compete in song, accompanied not only by the harmless necessary musician, but also by that long-popular Hudibrastic exercise, namely, the taking "by geometric scale the size of pots of ale."

Mr. Morton's "Harmonic Meetings" at this almost riparian kind of tavern became highly popular, and there-to resorted many a horny-handed musical amateur who could, as the phrase goes, "sing a good song." Among these warblers was a workman named Flaherty, who in a beautiful falsetto voice would deliver Irish and Scotch ballads with such sweet effect that speedily he became quite an idol among these enthusiastic Harmonic Meeters. All the singers were at first volunteers, who were requested by whatever chairman was selected for the evening to kindly "add to the gratification of the meeting" by "obliging" with a song. In due course, however, occasional professional aid was invoked. This was often contributed by sundry strolling

comic singers and conjurers who tramped from tavern to tavern, glad to bestow their talent upon all and sundry for a few shillings, plus their "drinks." On some occasions the Mortonian merry-makers were suddenly startled by a gaunt and cadaverous acrobat arising in their midst and offering for a consideration to "add to the harmony of the meeting" by putting his arms and legs out of joint there and then. Many such pilgrims were in those days to be found dragging along from "Free and Easy" to "Free and Easy," a phrase that was certainly ironic when applied to their own arduous experiences.

Mr. Morton was, however, in these early days what he ever remained, namely, a devotee and patron of the best form of athletics. He displayed great prowess at cricket, running, racquets, rowing, and the recent craze, walking. It is doubtless owing to his persistent indulging in these healthful pastimes that he so long retained his youthful vigour. Of course, another and very potent reason was that like good old Adam (Shakespeare's, not Moses's) in his youth he never applied hot and rebellious liquors to his blood.

Oft in the stilly morn Charles might have been observed angling in mid-stream, his favourite spots, within easy reach of business, being hard by Eel Pie Island and Teddington Lock. One of the jolly young watermen who used to row the youthful Morton was James Messenger, who, Morton predicted, would win his race against Tom Cole for the Championship of England, which he did.

After four or five years' tenure of the Crown—not of England, but of Pentonville—Mr. Morton sold it and emigrated City-wards, taking the erstwhile famous "India House" Tavern in Leadenhall Street. Here he confined himself more to licensed victualling than to lyrical ventures; and he bade fair to prosper amain. Just about this time, however, he had the mis-

fortune to lose his first wife. Under this heavy bereavement he was much comforted and helped by his sister Eliza, who afterwards married Mr. Frederick Stanley, head of that old-established firm of theatrical solicitors trading now as Stanley, Woodhouse and Hedderwick. Soon after this he also lost his father. Later his next elder brother and uncle came into the business, and soon after this his boy brother—the aforesaid William Henry Morton—was brought in to help in divers and sundry ways, and they all jogged along in concord, thus carrying out the Biblical advice to dwell together in unity.

In spite of his bereavements at this period and notwithstanding many another check, the ever courageous young Charles kept bravely forging ahead, and again ere long he soon received proofs of the truth of the lines in his then favourite song :—

“ Ah ! take my word there's nought goes wrong,
When hearts are right within.”



CHAPTER III.

THE OLD CANTERBURY TAVERN.

Morton's next venture was one that subsequently proved to be of the utmost importance to the *Variety World*, and to his own career. This was his acquiring in December, 1849, the "Old Canterbury Arms," then an ancient (not to say fish-like) tavern situated in the Upper Marsh, Lambeth. It was near an old toll-gate, a few yards from that long notorious "blood and thunder" playhouse, "the Bower Saloon," which years afterwards figured as the "little theatre in Stangate" in Tom Robertson's best play "Caste."

Many years before Charles Morton took over the Old Canterbury Arms there was a little river or creek, in fact, quite a navigable piece of water, draining the Lambeth Marshes. The willows, pollards, and meadows of those days presented quite a sylvan appearance compared with the Upper and Lower Marshes of more modern times.

The interior of the Old Canterbury Arms, in the immediate pre-Mortonian days, was not remarkable for its palatial character. Its accommodation consisted of a "Parlour" and four "Good, dry" skittle alleys. Even then the old hostelry had earned some fame for its occasional sing-songs, and, indeed, the late Sims Reeves years before had been known to contribute to the "Harmony, Gents!"

These concerts were held in the aforesaid club-room, which Mr. Morton soon transformed from its dingy pothouse character. He first added several highly-polished Spanish mahogany tables, on which were many handsome brass candlesticks, with candles of the best wax, glasses for spills

(and even for grog). These concerts here were at first held on Mondays and Saturdays, and were for "Men only." The "Sing-song," or "Free and Easy," however, soon proved so popular that mine host was ere long petitioned by his toiling clientele to provide a weekly Ladies' Night, in order that the men folk might bring their sweethearts and wives to add to the general joy of the whole (mahogany) tables, also to see how their lords and masters spent their evenings. In due course, therefore, the new proprietor instituted a series of "Ladies' Thursdays," and highly successful the daring innovation became.

One of the most popular and one of the handsomest "Chairmen" of these harmonic meetings was the host's brother, Robert, who was not only admirable in his sonorous demand for "Order, Gents, please," but also was a very striking tenor—if not always a tenor in tune.

Among the singers who "obliged" at this "Free and Easy" were several of considerable ability. One of these was a remarkable voiced tenor named "Billy" Williamson, a compositor. Williamson was entirely untrained, and Mr. Morton paid a professor to give him lessons, until he became quite a recognised vocalist. Williamson was but one of the dozens who sang there, without knowing a note of music, and mostly without any accompaniment. Indeed, instrumental aid would have driven most of these horny-handed, but sweet throated warblers "off song."

At these harmonious meetings there also appeared several other strong favourites. Among these was a strange personage named Tommy Keats. He was a little fellow (almost a "freak"), with absurdly short legs, a big ruddy face, a ditto ditto nose to match, and a stentorian voice several sizes too large for him. Very deceptive in appearance was Tommy upon occasion; for, although when standing up his stature reached about four feet, when sitting behind his foaming tankard and his double length "Churchwarden" he looked a man of nearly six feet high.

"Tommy," like two or three modern music hall warblers, was chiefly devoted to ballads of a breezy—not to say boozy—Bacchanalian order. He was regarded as especially "great" in intoning "Simon the Cellarer," and his description of Simon's Bardolphian proboscis betraying "How oft the Black Jack to his lips did go," had quite a realistic touch.

Another strong favourite at the "Canterbury Arms" was one Walter Ramsey, a fine figure of a man, who was wont to recite poems and "scenas," after the fashion since performed so powerfully in the Variety theatres by Mr. Bransby Williams, and certain other popular actors. Reciter Ramsey was much esteemed by "kind friends in front" for his delivery of a satire on the Government of the day, especially concerning the then common inhuman treatment not only of paupers, but even of soldiers and sailors. A quotation from this always vociferously welcomed poem may not be altogether uninteresting. It was entitled "Satan's Address to his Imps," and part of it ran thus:—

"Come hither ! My Imps," said Satan one day,
"Your attention ! I've something important to say ;
I'm tired of these old-fashioned laws and code,
And want something new in the torturing mode.
Now, I promise a prize
To him who will make the best use of his eyes.
A badge of distinction, and lucrative post
Shall be his who can find what will torture the most."

Away flew the Imps with a yell of delight,
And kept up a vigilant search all the night.
They returned next morn to the blazing gate,
And threw before him their precious freight.
One old-fashioned Imp, the last of that band,
Came with nine bleeding thongs, and a scroll in his hand,
And looking around with exultant grin,
He threw them on to the Prince of Sin.

"Hulloa ! What have we here. Why, where were these gained ?"
(Cried Old Nick when he read what the scroll contained).

"A whip ! That's good too ; the prize is to you,
But tell me on what dark corner of earth,
Did these monstrous specimens spring to birth ?"

"I found them, Your Highness," the Imp began,
"Where they boast of that freedom enjoyed by Man ;
Where Peace and Religion are prated about ;
Where Bishops read Sermons, and Statesmen spout !
I found these prepared for the Honest and Brave,
For the Soldier, the Sailor, and Artizan Slave !
I found them on England's far-famed soil,
That glorious guerdon of valour and toil ;
And they'll torture to madness—just failing to kill !—
They're the Cat o' Nine Tails and—the Poor Law Bill !"



CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST REAL CANTERBURY MUSIC HALL.

In due course, thanks to the excellent musical fare which Charles Morton provided, even at the hereinbefore-mentioned "Canterbury Arms" "harmonic meetings," the receipts grew by such leaps and bounds that the young manager began to feel himself justified in launching out, as it were. So ere long he built himself a comparatively lordly pleasure hall on the "Canterbury Arms" Bowling Green. To this new resort he gave the name of "The Canterbury Hall."

This, the first real "Canterbury," was opened on May 17th, 1852, and performances were given every evening, ladies being admitted at each performance, instead of on the two specially-arranged weekly "Ladies' Nights," as hitherto. Indeed, as we have shown earlier, Charles Morton was the first to make this musical provision for ladies at all; and for this graceful concession (much discussed at the time) he certainly deserved the thanks of the Sweet Sex.

The admission to this First Real Canterbury was by means of what was called a Sixpenny Refreshment Ticket—a kind of arrangement which present-day music-hall patrons found lately ruling at Gatti's, in the Westminster Bridge-road, only a few yards from the Canterbury itself. The new Mortonian hall, even at this low charge—of which, of course, part came back to the customer in "drinks"—was so great a success that after the first three months a sum was charged at the doors also. This sum was Threepence

per head for any part of the house! The only places where such a fee is now demanded are the galleries of certain of the vast Suburban and Provincial "Empires" and "Palaces" run by the huge Moss and Stoll Syndicate.

Mr. Morton's courteous consideration of the Dear Ladies soon began to place him somewhat in the position of the engineer who is hoist with his own petard. For, lo, the fair sex came in such abundance to the new Canterbury as to interfere somewhat with what is known in music hall establishments as the "Wet Money." The "dry money"—the aforesaid threepences—was, of course, not sufficient of itself to pay for such a fine company as he now regularly engaged. He was, therefore (he confessed), fain at times to descend to a little fiction, and to announce the Canterbury as being "full," in order that gentlemen who had brought their feminine belongings might be sent off elsewhere in favour of gentlemen who had not been so gallant.

Morton engaged John Caulfield, who had been for some years a member of the Haymarket Company, with whom he exercised his fine clear tenor voice, and his really excellent acting abilities. John Caulfield and his wife and their little son and daughter all played at the Haymarket and other important theatres of the period. The boy Caulfield, also named John, who played the harmonium at the First Canterbury, subsequently married that long popular and still surviving variety and theatrical favourite—Miss Constance Loseby—whose mother sang at night under the name of "Madame Losebini," and in the daytime ran one of the best of bonnet-shops in the Brompton-road.

The new Canterbury's choristers were somewhat mixed, including grown-up singers of both sexes, and a group of boy-warblers. Some of the members of the chorus, however, later became celebrated. These included E. L. Hime, Haydn Corri (son of Pat and nephew of Henri Corri), Edward Connell, Henry De Solla, Miss Pearce, a fine soprano, Mrs. Caulfield (who sang the long popular

American ditty "Bobbing Around"), and a basso-profundo, bearing the semi-romantic name of St. Clair Jones. But thereby hangs a tale.

This basso-profundo about this time concocted for Astley's Theatre, a play, the dramatis personæ of which included six elephants. The day after production, the profundo-playwright was met by Mr. Morton, who inquired how Jones's new piece was going?

"A damned failure, Guv'nor," responded the basso-profundo, in his most profound bass tones. "I wrote it for six gigantic elephants, and they only engaged three little beasts!" Here followed curses, both loud and deep.

On a subsequent occasion, this sepulchral-voiced inventor of plays for pachyderms absented himself from rehearsals without leave.

"Why were you not here at the 'call' to-day?" quoth Manager Morton.

"It wasn't necessary, Guv'nor!" growled the bold basso. "I know my part backwards."

"Yes," replied Morton, "That's the only way you do know it."

That time it was the manager who got the best of the verbal exchange, not as in the celebrated case when the late stage-manager, H. B. Farnie, denounced Arthur Roberts for coming two hours late at rehearsal, which was then a-days Arthur's custom always of an afternoon.

"You are a so-and-so unpunctual such-and-such sluggardly Ass!" exclaimed Farnie.

"Dead Heat!" quoth Roberts.

The late Sir Henry Irving not long ago possessed a low comedian who often got his "notice," but never took any notice of it. One day, driven to desperation, Sir Henry exclaimed, "But why are you still here, you had your notice?"

"Yes, guv'nor!" quoth the comedian, "But I cancelled it."

On one occasion Mr. Morton's "chairman," Joseph Barker, who was ignorant of Jones's latest dismissal, was surreptitiously approached by Jones, who thunderously whispered "Announce me next, I want to get away!" He was announced accordingly, whereupon, in magnificent voice, he proceeded to sing, with his eye fixed on the astonished Manager, "I cannot leave thee yet."

Of course, that evening Morton was once more merciful, and the breezy, but often bewildering basso, again "stayed on."



CHAPTER V.

A DIGRESSION ON DITTIES.

The comic part of the new Canterbury's entertainment was entrusted chiefly to such favourites as Tom Penniket, Elijah Tayler, Edmunds, and Wilkinson, and (towards the end of this first Canterbury) that wondrously popular singing humorist, Sam Cowell. The eccentric Sam's greatest successes there were in those plaintive comic ditties, "Billy Barlow," "The Rat-catcher's Daughter," and "Lord Lovell." Counterfeit presentments of his make-up and costume in each song are herewith counterfeitedly presented.

Cowell had several other songs of a like character, such as "The Little Fat Grey Man," "Alonzo the Brave, and The Fair Imogene," "The Life and Death of Bad Macbeth," "La Somnambula," and especially "Villikins and his Dinah," in which song the Great Little Robson was wont to score tremendously in the playhouses of the period. Indeed, it was after hearing Cowell sing the song one night at the Canterbury that Robson introduced it in the theatres.

Sam Cowell, who was descended from the old Siddons and Kemble families, was for some time an actor, and as such had appeared before the late Queen at Windsor. He had made a great deal of money, but he became bankrupt just before his death, and left his family "totally unprovided for," as the too common saying is.

Strangely enough, most of the comic songs of the period were deeply tragic in tone. The authors thereof were in the habit of retaining the real pathetic and often blood-thirsty details, which they professed to burlesque, merely serving them up afresh, as it were, with new trimmings in the way of the Cockney—or Wellerian—dialect, which Dickens—then in the zenith of his fame—had made so popular. It was the retaining of the gruesome—and in this

especial case—somewhat blasphemous, basis of an otherwise wildly comic song, that caused Thackeray, in the character of dear old Colonel Newcome, to rise and denounce the “Coal Hole” singer (meant, of course, for W. G. Ross), with his shudderful “Sam Hall” song.

It will doubtless surprise many to learn that the most



SAM COWELL IN THREE OF HIS GREATEST IMPERSONATIONS:—
“Billy Barlow,” “The Rat Catcher,” and “Lord Lovell.”

tragic of Sam Cowell’s “comic” songs, “The Ratcatcher’s Daughter” to wit, was written by a clergyman! That clergyman was no other than the Rev. Edward Bradley, who, under the pen-name of “Cuthbert Bede,” became so

famous as the writer of "Verdant Green, the Oxford Freshman"—a book that has delighted hundreds of thousands throughout Great Britain and the Colonies—not to mention America.

Here is another instance of the rapprochement between Church and Stage, which may be said to have originated with the Rev. John Home, who, after writing "Douglas" (with its famous "My Name is Norval" speech), found it expedient to change his "cloth" in order to avoid the persistent persecution of his fellow-religionists.

The Reverend Bradley's ballad, "The Ratcatcher's Daughter," not only drew tremendous "business" to the Canterbury of those days, but also it was so largely talked of that it was issued in a specially illustrated miniature book form by Miss Brigstocke. This booklet, quite an edition-de-luxe in its way—and now very scarce—bore the imprint "published by C. Morton, proprietor of the Canterbury Hall, 1855." Several of these really beautiful tragi-comic plates are here reproduced.

THE MELANCHOLY HISTORY OF THE RATCATCHER'S
DAUGHTER.



Not long ago in Vestminster,
There lived a Ratcatcher's Daughter ;
But she didn't live quite in Vestminster,
For she lived t'other side of the Vater.
Her father caught Rats, and she cried Sprats,
All about and over the quarter ;
And the gentlefolks, they all bought their Sprats
Of-the pretty little Ratcatcher's Daughter.

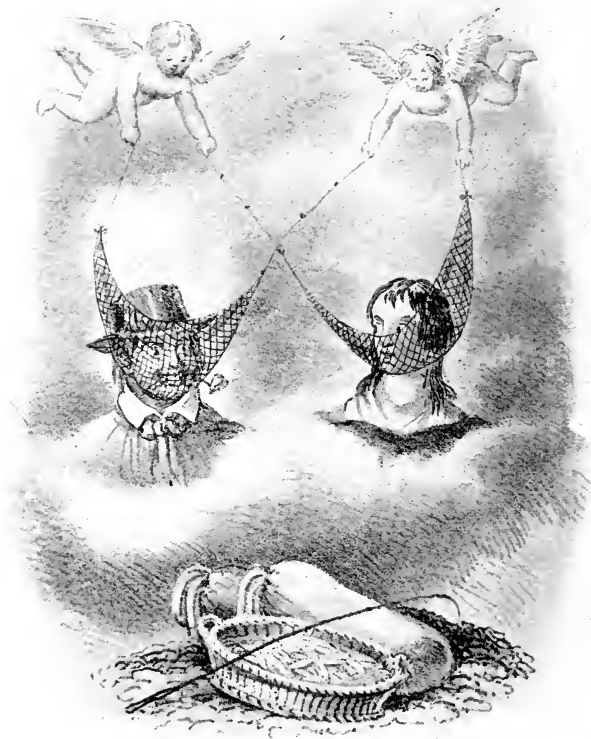
Heu ! tu diddle u !

Heu ! tu diddle u !



She wore no At upon her Ed,
 Nor Cap, nor dandy Bonnet,
 And her hairs they hung all down her neck,
 Like a bunch of Carrots upon it.
 When she cried "Sprats" in Vestminster,
 She had such a loud sweet voice, Sir,
 You could hear her all down Parliament St.
 As far as Charing Cross, Sir !

Heu ! tu diddle u !
 Heu ! tu diddle u !



Now rich and poor, both far and near
 In marriage, Sir, they sought her ;
 But at friends & foes she cocked up her nose
 Did this pretty little Ratcatcher's Daughter.
 For there was a man, cried " Lily-vite Sand,"
 In Cupid's net had caught her ;
 And right over head and ears in love,
 Vent the pretty little Ratcatcher's Daughter.

Heu ! tu diddle u !

Heu ! tu diddle u !



Now "Lily-vite Sand" so ran in her head,
 As she vent along the Strand, Oh!
 She forgot as she'd got Sprats on her head
 And she cried, "Do you vant any Lily-vite Sand, oh!"
 The folks amazed, all thought her crazed,
 As she vent along the Strand, oh!
 To see a girl with Sprats on her head
 Cry, "Do you vant any Lily-vite Sand, oh!"

Heu! tu diddle u!

Heu! tu diddle u!



Now Ratcatcher's Daughter so ran in his head,
 He couldn't tell what he was arter,
 So, instead of crying, "Do you vant any Lily-vite sand,"
 He cried, "Do you vant any Ratcatcher's Daughter?"
 His Donkey cocked his ears and brayed,
 And couldn't think what he was arter,
 When he heard his Lily-vite Sandman cry
 "Do you vant any Ratcatcher's Daughter?"

Heu ! tu diddle u !

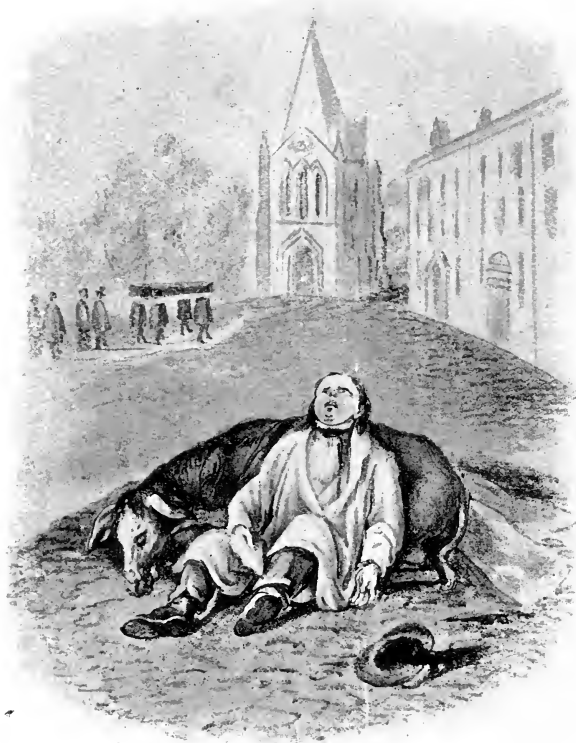
Heu ! tu diddle u !



They both agreed to married be
 Upon next Easter Sunday,
 But Ratcatcher's Daughter she had a dream,
 She wouldn't be alive on Monday.
 So she vent vunce more to buy some Sprats,
 And she tumbled into the Vater,
 And down to the bottom, all smothered in mud,
 Vent the pretty little Ratcatcher's Daughter !

Heu ! tu diddle u !

Heu ! tu diddle u !



When Lily-vite Sand he heard the news
 His eyes ran down with water,
 Said he, "in love I'll constant prove ;
 And — — — blow me if I'll live long arter !"
 So he cut his throat with a pane of glass,
 And he stabbed his Jackass arter ;
 So here is an end of Lily-vite Sand,
 Jackass — — — and the Ratcatcher's Daughter !

Heu ! tu diddle u !

Heu ! tu diddle u !

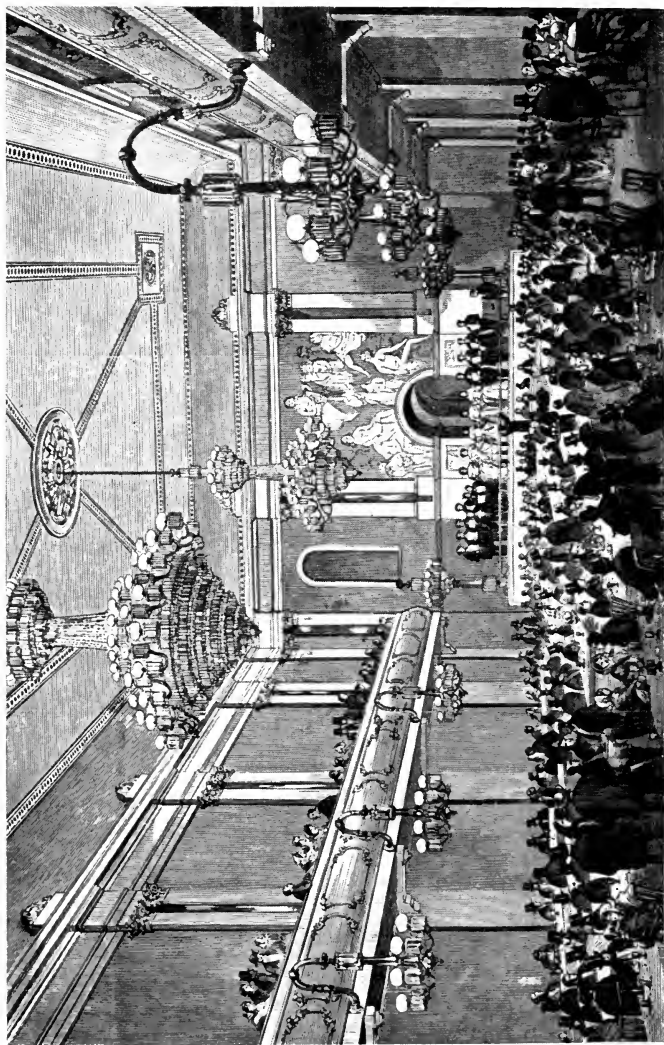
CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND CANTERBURY.

The first Canterbury Hall, which was also the first of the modern Music Halls, achieved such an enormous success, and continued to be patronised so lavishly, that Manager Morton was induced, some time later, to contemplate and to carry out a still larger and even more luxurious building. Thanks to the ingenious manager securing an equally ingenious architect and builder—(C. J. Field and James Reynolds respectively)—it was found possible to put up all the new stage and half the new hall without in any way interfering with the usual nightly entertainment. This half of the Second Canterbury was therefore opened to the public on the Monday, as the First Canterbury was closed on the previous Saturday. Thus, the legend observed in sundry tavern windows, namely, "Business carried on during alterations," was able to be utilised with especial emphasis on this occasion; and within a very short space of time the whole of Canterbury No. 2 was thrown open to the public. That is to say, on December 20th, 1854.

The Canterbury programme (or "House Bill" as it was then often called) was printed in a far neater style than was then common. It was in book form, and contained the words of the songs, glees, madrigals, etc., which then formed so great a feature of such entertainments; comic singing taking quite a second place, although, as already stated in these pages, comic singers were both numerous and useful.

Among the glees and part-songs listened to so earnestly, and applauded so enthusiastically in the Canterbury of the early and the mid-fifties, were such excellent pieces of work as "The Chough and Crow" (who, alas, long "To Roost



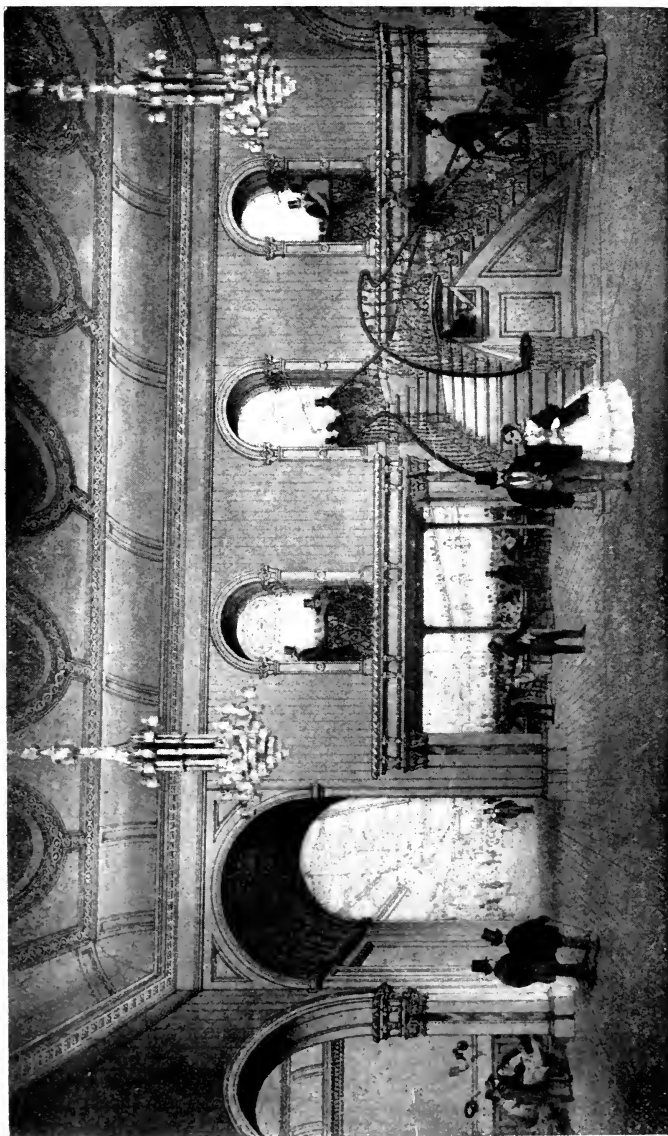
THE SECOND CANTERBURY.

have Gone"), "Tramp, Tramp, o'er Moss and Fell"; that stirring piece entitled "The Tiger couches in the Wood," those now occasionally heard glees (libretti by Shakespeare—or Bacon), "What shall He have that Killed the Deer?" "Who is Sylvia?" and "Tell me Where is Fancy Bred?" Also such national lyrics as the "March of the Men of Harlech," "The Marseillaise," the Tennysonian poem, "Home they Brought Her Warrior Dead," Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus," Pope's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," and that quaint little round which runs:

When the wind blows,
Then the mill goes,
Our hearts are light and merry.
When the wind drops,
Then the mill stops,
And we sing "Heigh down derry,"
And w-w-we s s-s-ing "Hey do-own der-r-r-y."

This idyllic, if somewhat inconsequent "Catch," will be remembered by all juvenile producers of that fine old blood-and-thunderous melodrama, "The Miller and His Men," in the Theatre Royal Back Drawing-room.

Mr. Charles Morton, who was, even then, nothing if not audacious, soon added to these glees, rounds, and catches certain of the best possible selections from the serious operas of the period. These operas included "Lucrezia Borgia," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Ernani," "William Tell," "Il Trovatore," "Il Ballo in Maschera," and "La Traviata," which still, in its original dramatic form of "La Dame aux Camelias," is so much beloved by all French star actresses, who from time to time come all the way from Paris to shed histrionic lustre upon our British boards. A little later than this, the manager found means to introduce to the English stage not only Gounod's "Faust," and also to give the first stage representations of the most typical works of the gay Offenbach. But, as Mr. Kipling says in another place. "That is another story."



THE SECOND CANTERBURY.

Before, however, quitting the very daring musical programmes put forth at this second Canterbury by Mr. Morton perhaps a still more striking proof of his unquenchable courage may be gathered from the fact that his selection in this connection included even Locke's music to "Macbeth." These charming numbers of Matthew Locke's have been for many a generation regarded by professionals (the most superstitious of all folk) as bringing the worst of bad luck and the most disastrous of disasters to any theatre, or such place wherein they have been chanted. The present writers have indeed known stage players who have even thrown up their engagements, and (to use the well-known professional phrase) "Walked out of the theatre," when they discovered that Locke's "Macbeth" music was about to be rehearsed. Indeed, there have been performers, and some of them are yet extant, who could, an they would, tell you heartrending stories of awful doom that befel any manager who should dare thus to invoke these delightful strains. In vain did such croakers as these pour their dreadful warnings into the ear of the manager. Being then, as he has been ever since, utterly proof against all such ridiculous forbodings, he continued to have Locke's music played, and much to the dismay of the superstitious, the Canterbury continued to prosper.



CHAPTER VII.

SOME EARLY CANTERBURY STARS.

Morton, being from his youth up an impresario who believed in the fitness of things, speedily took measures to provide his fine new Canterbury with a fine new company. Among the favourites soon found here were Alfred St. Aubyn (who afterwards left to join the famous Pyne and Harrison Opera Company), Russell Grover, a capital tenor singer, and a wonderfully popular alto, namely, Little Tommy Farrant, who was also known as the "Mouse." This melodious "mouse," with his shrill but sweet tones, was wont to "take the roof off" (as the saying is) during the Crimean War time, by chortling to the Canterbury pilgrims of the period a couple of apropos ditties, respectively entitled, "Alma's Heights" and "England's Queen to England's Heroes." About this time Charles Morton was much honoured by the fact of the late Queen Victoria graciously accepting and acknowledging a copy of the last-named song, printed on the same material that was used for the making of poor crazed Tilburina's frock, that is to say, white satin.

Among the most popular Canterbury favourites of this period were such all-round vocal and instrumental artistes as Tom Bartleman, J. G. Forde (most voluble of comic patterers and ancestor of Harry Ford, the popular comic singer, A. G. Forde, a clever stage manager, and two or three other Fordes, more or less connected with the profession); Herr Von Joel, the great whistler of the time; Charles Sloman, an extempore vocalist who was really a wonder in his line; good old Herr Jonghmanns, and Tom Penniket. Penniket was a kind of taller Dan Leno, who lasted well into the seventies, when alas! he might have been observed chortling his most comic ditties at such

then low-down haunts as a little free-and-easy called "Giles's Music Hall," in Bath Street, City Road.

The Canterbury's bill was strong in comedians of sundry kinds. The lengthy array included Billy Pell, who claimed to be the first to play a bone solo in this country; old Bob Glyndon, who

after a long course of singing "The Literary Dustman," later introduced marionette shows into England; and the hereinbefore mentioned careless Sam Cowell.



SAM COWELL AS HIMSELF.

Cowell's chief business at the second Canterbury was to sing with Herr Jonghmanns a peculiar serio-comic duet, which was in much demand. It was entitled "Faust and Monseieur Le Diable," and was, of course, a travesty upon the famous fable and opera. Its audacious rhymes ran thus:—

Once upon a time in Gottingen,
 A fine old German city;
 A student liyed who o'er his books
 Each day and night would sit he!
 His mind and mem'ry were well stored
 With every kind of knowledge;
 In fact, so long o'er books he pored,
 He was a walking college.
 For forty years he struggled hard,
 With spirits good and evil,
 He tried in vain to raise the wind—
 At last he raised the devil!

At this point Jonghmanns entered in diabolical garb, whereupon Cowell remarked, "Why, who the devil are you?" Jonghmanns answered, in his brave Belgian dialect, "I am de gentleman of whom you've just spoke," whereupon Cowell rejoined, with cutting irony, "The Devil you are!" The blithe comic and bold basso then proceeded to discuss diabolically all sorts of topics of the day, as set forth for them by the author, John Caulfield. The singers, it must be confessed, often drifted, when the managerial eye was not upon them, into that form of humour which Arthur Roberts has described so characteristically as "near the knuckle." As for Jonghmanns, he seemed to revel in the fiendish, for another of his vocal *tours de force* was that inferno kind of outburst entitled, "Twice Ten Thousand Imps of Darkness!"

Harking back awhile to "improvisatore" artistes, it may be said that those of us who patronised the entertainments of the period—and even a little later—very often met with some strange experiences, both as regards the artists themselves and the habits and customs of kind friends in front. The "improvisatore" was wont to ask the audience to supply him with topics or with uncommon words and phrases, which he undertook promptly to versify.

On one occasion a certain exponent, who shall—nay must, for the time be nameless—had been making several hits during his turn, and that in spite of the illiteracy which he struggled so hard to conceal. All sorts of attempts to baffle this vocal bard had failed, bringing their respective shouting suggesters into ignominy. At length the then struggling and afterwards highly prosperous playwright (the late Henry Pettitt) thought, good easy youth, to nonplus the illiterate rhyming troubadour by giving out as a subject for lightning rhyme the blessed word "Mesopotamia." For a moment the "improvisatore" looked daggers! Then the artiste stalked solemnly to the foot-

lights, and adopting a grave and reverent demeanour, exclaimed "Lydies and gene'l'men, I myke it a rule never to touch upon Scriptural subjects!" The audience, of course, then shed their guffaws on our nonplussed playwright, who sought refuge in penitence and the next door "pub."



CHAPTER VIII.

SOME MORE SURREY SIDE MAGNETS.

Three vocal and instrumental comedians were also especial favourites in the last century's mid-fifties at the Canterbury. These were Sam Collins, Tom Maclagan, and E. W. Mackney. Sam Collins was the celebrated Irish comic singer (born S. Vagg) who started, in the early sixties, the still popular Collins's Music Hall on Islington Green. It was of him, his contemporary, the popular topical singer Harry Sidney, wrote the following epitaph :

" Farewell, honest-hearted Sam,
Until we meet before the Great I Am !"

And poor Harry, one of the most corpulent comedians then to be found upon the stage, was not long in starting himself for that Dread Meeting.

Sam Collins, a noble-hearted fellow, was one of the drollest Irish comic singers of his time—and there were a good many clever Hibernian comedians about in those days. His singing of "The Sprig of Shillelagh," "Donnybrook Fair," and similar racy ditties, was very effective, and his Irish jigs were highly inspiriting. Poor Sam's biggest hit, however, was made about the time of the Great Exhibition of 1862, in a fine topical song, of which a "lady's version" was given by that rich-toned acting vocalist, the late Mrs. F. R. Phillips. This song had for refrain the phrase "No Irish need apply!" and, as set to the old air, "Will you walk into my parlour said the spider to the fly?" was soon warbled and whistled all over London. Sam Collins was the uncle of the late Mr. Herbert Sprake, who so long honourably and successfully ran Collins's.

Tom Maclagan, although lacking the rollicking humour of Sam Collins, was far less limited in scope, and was indeed one of the cleverest and most varied Canterbury artistes. He could sing almost any kind of song, comic or serious; he could also dance and play the fiddle after the fashion attributed to the surnameless "William that married Susan," namely, "like a hangel." After a long course



MISS CONSTANCE LOSEBY.

J. CAULFIELD, JUN.
(Husband of C. Loseby).

of singing comic songs, the best ballads, and all sorts of operatic selections for Mr. Morton, Tom Maclagan became a big star at the huge Britannia Theatre in Hoxton, where, during the height of the American Civil War, he was wont to "black up" and sing between the pieces, the topical

Nigger song "Pity Poor Uncle Sam." This plaintive, but unconsciously humorous ballad, and the stirring "Stonewall Jackson" ditty, sung at the same time at the same place, by Miss Constance Loseby, were for a long time chanted throughout the streets of Hoxton.

Maclagan's varied talents later found even larger and certainly more fashionable recognition, for some six or seven years after, this serio-

comic dancing violinist blossomed forth as leading tenor of the Lyceum Theatre, forsooth ! Here he played Faust with much melodiousness, plus a strong Scotch accent. He had a Caledonian sternness and wildness that somewhat detracted from the realism of the character of poor Marguerite's mystic betrayer. Not long before his death, two or three years ago, poor Tom MacLagan re-appeared at the present Canterbury, where, strangely enough—and in order, perhaps, still further to display his versatility, he chiefly indulged in a series of imitations of the comic singers of the past. His best was that of the then long-dead friend and fellow-entertainer, Sam Cowell, in one of those tragical "Tiddy-iddy-um-tum-tay" kind of ditties which were so popular forty or fifty years ago. Many of poor old Tom's friends dropped away from him towards the end. One thing, however, clung to him to the last—that was his terribly strong Caledonian accent.

The other big comic star of the early Canterbury days was the still hale and hearty octogenarian, E. W. Mackney, who in his rural cottage at Enfield on the Lea, revels in reminiscences of these times.

This really gifted singer, dancer, and instrumentalist has lived to see a far-reaching "recrudescence," as one may say, of the "coon" songs that were then quite a novelty. In fact, it was just about the middle fifties, that Mackney and his old, and also then "blackening-up" and banjo-playing comrade, Joseph Arnold Cave, were, so to speak, the pioneers of the modern style of burnt-cork business that afterwards broke out more virulently with the late David Crockett and the still-surviving "Pony" Moore in the Christy and Moore and Burgess Minstrels.

Mackney was one of the greatest performers of his time—whether at comic-singing, clog-dancing, and banjo, bone or fiddle-playing—and speedily gained great renown at the Canterbury. Here he was placarded chiefly by means of a



A MACKNEY POSTER OF 1852.

quaint coloured picture by the late pantomime mask designer, "Dykwynkn"—a picture herewith reproduced.

It was to Mr. Morton that this eminent burnt-cork performer owed his first good chance of scoring with the public. Mackney himself tells how, while he was doing a midnight turn at Evans's Supper Rooms (now the National Sporting Club), that the manager "spotted" him as a coming man. The usual terms at Evans's—then under the



Photo Milton Meyers.

MR. E. W. MACKNEY.

direction of the celebrated "Paddy" Green—were a guinea a week, plus your supper nightly, and a certain amount of "liquid" refreshment during the entertainment. Mackney, after a struggle to get a show there at all, did so well that even "Paddy"—never too extravagant in salary-giving—granted him a substantial "rise." It was then that Morton, finding Mackney so promising, and his chances so circumscribed, made him an offer.

During Mackney's term at the Canterbury, he had among his comic comrades J. W. Sharp, who was one of the funniest fellows that ever appeared on any stage. His method was very similar to that of Arthur Roberts; and he had as nimble and ready a wit. Mr. Mackney is of opinion that Sharp has never been replaced. It was either at Vauxhall Gardens, or at Evans's, where Sharp added to his small weekly allowance of lucre and liquor by selling personally in the hall, manuscript copies of his most popular songs, such as "Who'll Buy My Images?" and "Pity the Downfall of poor Old Punch and Judy," the quaint melody of which has been used as "melos" for any "Punch and Judy" business on the stage ever since.

Poor "Jack" Sharp drifted into becoming a "tramp" comic singer, making a collection in this or that tavern bar, and finally he drifted into the Dover Workhouse, where he died in January, 1856, aged thirty-eight. Thus perished, in a penniless and destitute condition, one whom many a sound critic, including the late E. L. Blanchard, was wont to describe as "*the* comic singer of his time!"

Mr. Mackney tells how on a certain night while he was singing at a Catch Club in Dover, a dirty card was brought in to him. It bore the name of poor Sharp, and begged that a little collection might be made for him. Mackney, to spare his fellow-comedian's feelings in this regard, went out and administered prompt relief, with an extra bit for future needs. But within a few weeks Sharp was again in "Queer Street."

Mr. Mackney often relates a little episode which occurred during his engagement at the Canterbury, when his quaint nigger ditties, such as "Ladies, won't you Marry?" "Sally, Come Up," "The Garret near the Sky," "I wish I was with Nancy," were the talk of London. So was his droll ballad entitled "I Wish I was a Baby."

The music hall patrons of those days were not always such desirable boon companions as those of modern times—

the so-called "swells" of the period were obnoxious when occasion served, and they seemed to make it serve pretty often. One night one of these rolling gentry lurched into the Canterbury saloon, and, seeing Mr. Morton close at hand, loftily addressed him in as steady a tone as he was able to acquire at such short notice.

"I say, Morton!" exclaimed this howling swell, "Have you any fellows here who sing in 'rags?' (he meant to say 'in character')."

"Yes," replied Morton, "We have Sam Cowell." "O-ah!" quoth his Swell-ness, "that's the fellah that sings 'Billy Barlow'—got any othiahs?"

"Yes," said Morton, "There's Mackney." "Oh, Mac-nay," responded the gentleman, "That's the fellah that plays the tom-tom, ain't it?" and with that the "swell" at once swept the board of all the decanters, glasses, sugar basins, and pipes that lay on an adjacent table, in order that he might pay for the "damage," and exclaim "D—n the expense."

Just before these lines were sent to press the hale old Mackney told the present writers that it was Charles Morton who first billed him as "The Great Mackney," and that Morton did this without consulting him. Mackney confesses that when he saw these placards in and around the Canterbury he began to quake with fear and trembling.

Presently he remarked: "I say, Morton, I wish you wouldn't bill me in this lofty manner. It makes me feel such a terrible sense of responsibility."

"You be hanged!" quoth Morton; "I pay you a salary, and all you are concerned with is doing your business to the best of your ability. It is *my* business to bill you in what *I* think is the best audience-attracting manner. Therefore I shall bill you as 'The Great Mackney,' or any other Mackney that strikes me as the most remunerative fashion!"

"Which" (adds Mackney) "was even then characteristic of the 'thoroughness' of my old friend and manager." And it was.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME OF THE LADY STARS AT THE CANTERBURY.

At this second Canterbury, with its entertainment and its general environment so different from such even then extant rowdy resorts as the "Cider Cellars" and "The Coal Hole," the programme was also celebrated for the lady artistes who appeared. These included such brilliant and popular singers as Miss Pearce, Miss Brunell, Miss Ernst, Miss Mary Townley, and Miss Turpin, the wife of Henry Wallack, whose brother built Wallack's Theatre, New York.

Among all the there, however, the sweetest of Miss Russell, the Canterbury, quently to the those who loved full music beau-

Miss Russell the late Henry therefore cousin nautical nove-Clark Russell, composer, Mr.



MISS RUSSELL.

sweet singers undoubtedly that group was who drew to and subse-Oxford, all to hear beautifully sung.

was the niece of Russell, and to the popular list, Mr. Wm. to the clever Landon Ronald

and to the well-known operatic impresario, Mr. Henry Russell, late of the new Waldorf Theatre. Miss Russell, it is thought, made her greatest hit in "Faust," of which opera she was the original singer when it was first heard in England at the Second Canterbury. It was in such selections as these that this star of Mr. Morton's could best exercise her splendid soprano voice and her dramatic method.

Another lady "star" at the Canterbury during Mr. Morton's long triumphant spell of management thereat was an artiste who subsequently became very famous in comic-opera, and who re-appeared in that form of opera only a few months ago, under her own name of Emily Soldene. When this fine singing actress, or acting singer, first came to the Canterbury and timidly sought an engagement, she disguised herself for the nonce under the nom de theatre of



MISS EMILY SOLDENE.

"Miss FitzHenry." Under this name she sang batches of ballads by herself, and also appeared in numerous operatic selections, both at the Canterbury and at the Oxford—thereby laying the foundation of her world-wide operatic renown.

Miss Soldene recounts in her smart, not to say "saucy," Theatrical and Musical Recollections many an interesting

anecdote, that grew around Mr. Morton's famous management of the Canterbury at this period. Among these little stories not the least interesting is that which this lady tells concerning her application for an engagement there.

On the day appointed the fair Emily, still disguised as "Miss FitzHenry," presented her letter of introduction (and her attractive self) at the doors of the Canterbury, in order to meet the late eminent vocalist, Mr. Jonghmanns, who, being then the musical conductor, was instructed to hear her give off her cadenzas, roulades, and so forth. Having at that time lofty ambitions with regard to operatic vocalization of the higher order, Miss Soldene confesses that she regarded her application to the Canterbury as a bit of a "come down." Presently, however, she plucked up courage, and soon found herself in the long picture gallery at the other end of which she observed that a rehearsal was being held. The operatically erudite Emily, according to her own statement, appears to have carried herself, in a somewhat "high-toney" manner on passing through the Canterbury portals. Indeed, it would seem that her demeanour, doubtless owing to her chronic nervousness, expressed some disdain of the Canterbury's general "environment." Anyhow, as Miss Soldene swept along that celebrated hall's celebrated picture gallery, Mr. Charles Morton's brother, William, was heard to remark in a stage whisper, to Mr. Jonghmanns, as he indicated the approaching cantatrice, "Ferdy, What's *This*?"

Ferdy replied: "D—— if I know. It's sent on by der Governor; but it's all right if it can sing."

"It" could, and did sing, and to such effect, that long engagements with Mr. Morton at the Canterbury; and subsequently at the Oxford, ensued. At both of these houses Miss "FitzHenry" rendered fine service, especially in a Christmas Cantata, by the late Herr Meyer Lutz; and in the selections from certain Offenbachian operas-bouffes.

CHAPTER X.

MORE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE CANTERBURY.

With regard to making the Canterbury more attractive it soon became evident that Mr. Charles Morton's managerial appetite grew by what it fed on. Thus, instead of absorbing for himself all the money which he was making during his management thereof, he devoted a considerable amount of his hard-won profits to further improving that already fine building. He began by accumulating a number of the best paintings of the best artists, including works by Sir A. Callcott, David Maclise, W. P. Frith, T. C. Creswick, Herring, sen., Benjamin Haydon, Horace Vernet, Rosa Bonheur, and her less known sister Julia. So numerous did these works become that Mr. Morton was fain to build for himself another lordly pleasure house in order to contain the priceless treasures. The new building took the form of an annexe, the foundation stone of which was laid by his daughter, Miss Eliza Stanley Morton, in 1856. It was opened in the same year, and was at once happily nick-named by the late George Augustus Sala, in *Punch*, "The Royal Academy over the Water."

It was open day and night—even on Sunday nights—to the public, who expressed themselves hugely delighted with this Fine Art Gallery, which was full of all kinds of provision for the comfort of patrons, including all sorts of amusing and instructive books, and all the current papers and periodicals, illustrated and otherwise.

On Sunday nights the number of visitors admitted on the then prevalent "sixpenny refreshment ticket" was indeed very great. Quite a roaring trade was done in all kinds of "creature comforts," which were dispensed at very

moderate charges. For example, you could get a dozen native oysters and bread and butter for a shilling, and for the same sum the finest of chops and the flouriest of potatoes baked "in their jackets." Therefore it was not to be marvelled at that, in addition to the general public, such famous benefactors as Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray were wont to visit the Canterbury regularly, and to advertise far and wide its overwhelming superiority to the frowsy metropolitan music halls, "Cider Cellars," and "Coal Holes" of the period.

It should be added that towards the end of his reign at the Canterbury, Morton made sundry highly original departures regarding his form of entertainment there. These departures included a then somewhat novel form of prize competition for the best comic song; the various lyrics to be tried by the erratic Sam Cowell. There was also a series of "Ghost" and "Talking Head" illusions; and many scenas and other oddities by that droll humorist, George Hodson, grandfather of the afterwards celebrated actress, Miss Henrietta Hodson (now Mrs. Henry Labouchere).

In due course Manager Morton also introduced an entertainment in which George Hodson was the tambourine-playing corner man; and the then popular vocalist, Mrs. Bartleman, "blackened up," and also took part, thereby becoming a sort of prototype of that versatile comedian, Miss Louie Freear. This droll little lady, in her juvenile days, often had to do this sort of thing in Christy Minstrel troupes before she took to playing in Shakespeare with Mr. Ben Greet and Mr. Beerbohm Tree, and subsequently deviated into musical farce, "Chinese Honeymooning," "Boy-Bob-bing," and comic singing in the halls.

It may be supposed that, what with his having to rule such widely contrasted artistes, and their temperaments to match, and what with sundry persecutions from rival managers (of whom more anon), Manager Morton suffered

enough tribulation to make him indulge in more or less bad language—generally more. But as the cheery manager had always shown great temperance as regards liquor absorption, so he ever manifested a similar moderation with regard to language-distribution. Even when he was driven to using a D it was not a very big one. In this respect he certainly proved an exception to many another manager, especially of those days. And thereby hangs a tale concerning one of his brother-managers who at the very time indicated ran a theatre situated not a thousand leagues from the Canterbury itself.

The obligatory lessee in question was wont not only to pepper his remarks with many expletives to the square inch, but he also had a habit of exclaiming to any person who dared to refuse this or that part: "What! you won't take it? Then so and so and so forthly take *That!*" "That" mostly took the form of a tremendous upper-cut.

It so happened that a now renowned actor, who had just joined this lurid language lessee's company chanced during that naughty person's absence from the stage at rehearsal, to express his dissatisfaction at the part which had been allotted to him.

His fellow-players, knowing their manager's custom in such matters, implored him not to complain, telling him of the exclamation and action above-mentioned.

"Oh! he'll do *that*, will he," said the actor, then a very struggling histrion. "We shall see!" He at once dashed to the manager's dressing-room, and, forcing his way in, exclaimed: "Mr. —, I am not going to accept this so-and-so part; and you can such and suchly take '*That.*'" With this, or rather with "*that*," the mutinous mummer landed his manager full upon his proboscis and sent him spinning like a tee-to-tum.

It is but fair to the volcanic-voiced manager to say that subsequently he not only forgave his young assailant, and insisted upon taking him to the adjoining tavern and

standing him lashings of liquor, but the attack largely helped in causing him henceforth to "Moderate the rancour of his tongue," as Apollo advises in the old burletta "Midas."

It may as well here be confessed that that audacious young attacker was Mr. James Fernandez, who when playing with Mr. Tree at Windsor Castle of late was complimented so heartily by the King.



CHAPTER XI.

CHARLES MORTON AS LAW-BREAKER.

The subject of this "Mortonography," as will already have been gathered by the reader, had always exhibited that daring desire for innovation which has from time immemorial marked the man of genius. Like other intrepid innovators, Mr. Morton soon found himself in active collision with the powers that be, or rather the powers that were.

Harking back to some ten years before the end of our preceding chapter, it is necessary to point out that this Manager, at the Christmas of 1855, introduced at the Canterbury a form of entertainment, *then* perfectly novel, but now general throughout the Variety world. This form of entertainment was a Dramatic Sketch. The sketch in question was entitled "The Enchanted Hash," and was written by W. F. Vandervell, composed by his son Wilhelm, and had for its principal interpreters Thomas Bell and Edward Marshall, who in later years many of us have seen play the piece entirely by himself. The dramatis personæ of this sketch included an old man, his wife, their daughter, her two lovers, one demon, one good fairy, and the usual characters of a harlequinade.

Like Mr. Midshipman Easy's wet-nurse's baby, this sketch was "only a very little one." Nevertheless, it created what another author of some importance would call "Alarums and excursions," especially among the contemporary—we do not say contemptible—theatrical managers of the time. These irate impresarii turned all sorts of colours with jealousy at the success achieved by the Canterbury's burlesque play. The said managers went so far as to hold secret conclaves, and in due course instituted proceedings against Mr. Morton, who was also in due course brought up before the local magistrates.

After considerable palaver it was ruled that, as two persons in the sketch had speaking parts, the piece therefore was a stage play. The performance of "The Enchanted Hash" was thus speedily stopped by Order of the Law, a proceeding which, as many will remember, has been repeated for many years since in connection with a large number of such pieces.

Strangely enough, when Marshall, as above indicated, produced a second "E-Dish-ion" of "The Enchanted Hash," playing all the characters and speaking all the dialogue himself—with the explanation of his next character written upon the leaves of an enormous book—the envious theatrical-managers were unable to invoke the Law.

These envious managers watched for an opportunity to sweep Charles Morton, like an obstacle, from their respective paths. Their opportunity for this later action came with the production of a selection, which was very ambitious indeed. It was a condensation of Shakespeare's last play, "The Tempest," which was produced by Morton in some such fashion as the poets Davenant and Dryden presented their garbled version of the piece just about two hundred years earlier!

The abbreviated version of "The Tempest" was, in more senses than one, unfortunate. In the first place, a night or two after its production the leading actor, one Graham, broke a blood vessel and died. The next day, Mr. Morton's brother William, who had learned the part of Prospero from hearing it rehearsed, went on and played it at a moment's notice. Later the aforesaid Marshall, although a low comedian, took up the part.

Presently, to make confusion still more confounded, the Law again stepped in, and "took up" Charles Morton. Not only, bear in mind, for this untempestuous version of "The Tempest," but chiefly on account of a kind of little burlesque or pantomime which he had audaciously produced upon his Canterbury Stage. This pantomime, which had

for one of its chief features a variant of the aforesaid "ghost" illusion, was built around "Billy" Randall, and thus was more of a monologue than an actual dramatic piece. Nevertheless, sundry malignant theatrical managers took steps to prosecute all concerned for "having performed a stage play in an unlicensed place."

Of course, it has to be remembered that the Canterbury, like most of the present variety houses, had no dramatic license. Thus it is that from time to time, even in this "so-called twentieth century" (as a recent Hyde Park orator sagely observed), the rulers of the regular playhouses continued to make skirmishing attacks upon their variety managerial brethren. Why, even as this volume is passing through the press, there have been many proofs of a revival of the foolish persecution of which Charles Morton was the earliest and one of the latest variety victims.

To cut this legal story shorter than the lawyers would, it has to be recorded that Charles Morton, together with the whole strength of his company, were, exactly fifty years ago, summoned to appear at Lambeth Police Court before the then sitting magistrate, the Hon. Mr. Norton, husband of that once popular poetess, the Hon. Mrs. Norton, whose trials and troubles, domestic and otherwise, suggested to that great—if occasionally mystifying—novelist, Mr. George Meredith, his beautifully drawn heroine, Diana of the Crossways.

The defendant Morton vigorously defended himself in such sort that the worthy magistrate said that he would visit the Canterbury to see the entertainment complained of, and would bring with him several magisterial friends from Bow-street and elsewhere, before giving his decision. The South London Solon was as good as his word; and after seeing the entertainment he expressed himself as delighted therewith. At the adjourned hearing the Hon. Mr. Norton gave his decision in the following terms:—

"I am sorry, indeed, Mr. Morton, to have to fine you

for the production of such a splendid novel and pleasant entertainment. But the Law is very strong on this point ; and enacts that you shall not perform a stage play, or any part of it, in an unlicensed place. . . . I must, therefore, fine you Five Pounds!"

Strangely enough, this decision, together with a full description of the entertainment, appeared in the *Times* newspaper, which had never before given any notice of any music hall. Moreover, the *Times* had never inserted an advertisement of any such entertainment. Upon this, however, Manager Morton offered the *Times* an advertisement, which was graciously accepted. In due course advertisements of other music halls were taken in that, and other papers ; and thus Charles Morton became, as one may say, the pioneer of variety advertisements, as he had been the pioneer of the entertainments themselves.



CHAPTER XII.

MORTON AS A SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT PIONEER.

Throughout Mr. Morton's management of the Canterbury, his noble picture gallery and splendid lounge were open every Sunday evening, and hundreds of rational beings, had there weekly a few hours' rational enjoyment at the smallest possible outlay, and without any vexatious interference.

It is to be noted, however, that several years later when the Canterbury was let to the late Mr. William Holland, that vivacious and varied impresario was informed by the authorities that he would not be allowed to open the Canterbury Lounge on Sunday nights!

On Mr. Holland asking the reason for this somewhat haughty mandate, he was informed that the Sunday opening of the Canterbury was a privilege granted only to Mr. Charles Morton, and that this was because he had created and carried on such an orderly and well-conducted entertainment. It was added that the Licensing Authorities were afraid to trust anyone else! And so, forsooth, ended the harmless Sabbath evenings at the Canterbury.

From the foregoing remarks it will be seen that Morton was the first to introduce interesting and utterly inoffensive Sunday evening entertainments, such as now-days are so extensively given—with sacred and other high class music and plus instructive lectures—by the National Sunday League and kindred public-spirited associations.

These early attacks on such calm and utterly un sinful entertainments as those given in the Canterbury Lounge were, of course, but the natural outcome of those ultra-puritanical measures, and suggested measures, which

Charles Dickens, even in his younger days, so boldly and so brilliantly denounced in his famous triple essay entitled, "Sunday Under Three Heads." Dickens's splendid and courageous denunciations of those smug, self-satisfied Mawworms and Cantwells, who were horrified to find the average honest toiler go in quest of a little fresh air or enjoy a couple of hours' harmless recreation on the Sabbath caused quite a sensation. The essay is to be found in the "Collected Papers" of Dickens.

This ultra-Sabbatarianism was also satirised in song, one saucy stanza running in this wise :—

"No duck must lay, no cat must kitten,
No hen must leave her nest, though sittin' !
Though painful is the situation,
She must not think of incubation ! . . .
For as no business must be done on Sunday,
Of course, they'll have to put it off till Monday !"



CHAPTER XIII.

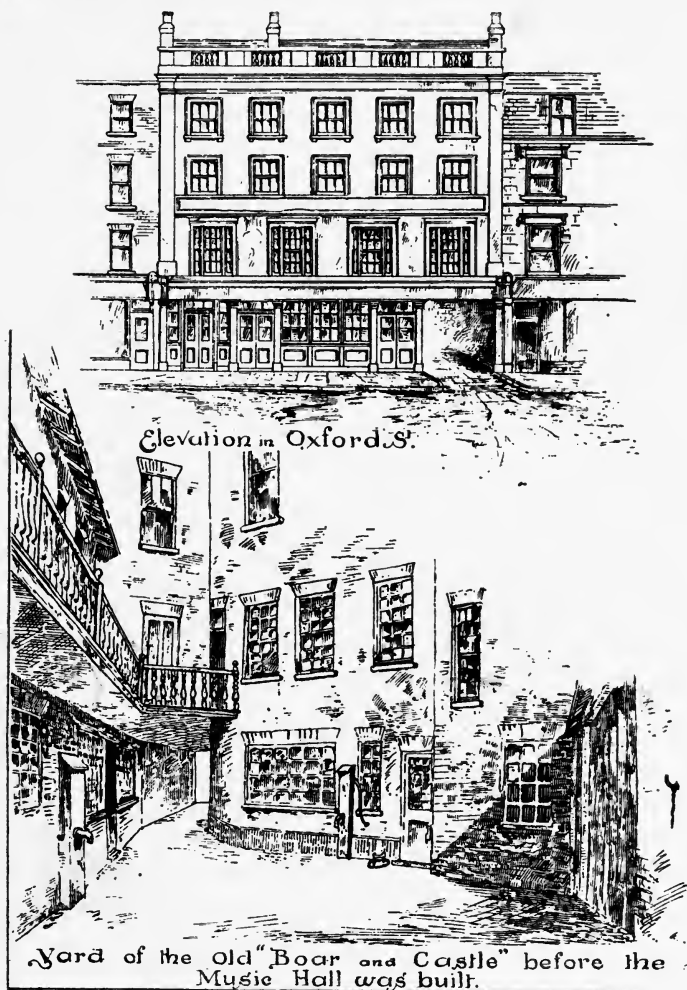
MORTON BUILDS ANOTHER HALL.

During the year 1859 Manager Morton took into partnership his brother-in-law, Mr. Frederick Stanley. One of the principal outcomes of this partnership as regarded the Canterbury was the production of yet another audacious sketch, which formed yet another bold infringement of the Law, and was regarded with very mixed feelings by theatrical managers, especially on the Surrey side, where, as the late Henry S. Leigh sang, one should always look for "true dramatic art." This saucy production was entitled "Ri-Fum-Ti-Fum," and it was the last spectacular sketch used at the Canterbury during the management mentioned.

Morton, like some variety Alexander, had for some time past been looking around for more music hall worlds to conquer. A chance for such conquering anon occurred. It took the form of an ancient Oxford-street Inn called "The Boar and Castle." It was a quaint as well as old place, dating back to the early part of the seventeenth century. As an old posting house, it possessed one of those rambling galleried inn-yards which in the British Drama's early days were so often used by strolling players. This was especially the case during those times when the Puritans adopted a plan which certain modern County Councillors of the more bigoted type would like to see adopted now-a-days—namely, the total abolition of the theatres.

In this hostelry's later days it became the resort of the Bohemian roysterers that then abounded, namely, "The Young Bloods," the more or less dashing "Dandies," and the always brawling "Bucks" of the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

There is reason to believe that long years before this enterprising manager had matured his plans for his new great Music Hall for West End patrons he had often cast



an eye or so upon the above-named antiquated "licensed premises," a picture of which is herewith presented.

The transformation which Mr. Morton effected in this

old resort of London rollickers was indeed startling and complete. The new music hall which appeared upon this site, and was opened on March 26th, 1861, was called the Oxford. It was a very handsome building, 94ft. long and



INTERIOR OF OLD HALL (OXFORD).

44ft. wide, exclusive the large promenade. The roof, supported by massive Corinthian columns, was 41ft. high. One of the most striking features was the splendid manner in which the place was lighted throughout. The "star" method of illuminating was adopted, the tubes and jets being covered with artistic glass work.

The creature-comfort providing traditions of the demolished ancient inn were more than preserved at this new Oxford Music Hall, which Morton and his aforesaid brother-in-law, Frederick Stanley, had built at the cost of £35,000.

As at the Canterbury, there was a very large, but very cosy, supper room, with plenty of accommodation for the supping part of the eighteen hundred persons which this new and beautiful hall would seat comfortably. Indeed, for several years the management proudly advertised the Oxford as "Not only the place for music and amusement; but a place to lunch, dine, and sup at till one o'clock in the morning."

This much for the new Oxford as a building, some of the beauties of which may be gathered from the accompanying illustration. And now for some account of this gorgeous temple's style of entertainment, and (alas) its subsequent fate.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN SPITE OF A FIGHT, THE OXFORD OPENS.

The magnificent Oxford was not allowed to open without the expression of much heartburning on the part of sundry rival music hall managers. One of the most persistent of these managerial foes was Edward Weston, who was then running Weston's Music Hall, a building which later became transformed into that commodious Holborn variety theatre, the Royal. The warfare which whizzed around Manager Morton and his partner Stanley caused much comment in the public prints of the period. Indeed, more than one popular black and white artist found in these dissensions much scope for pictorial treatment.

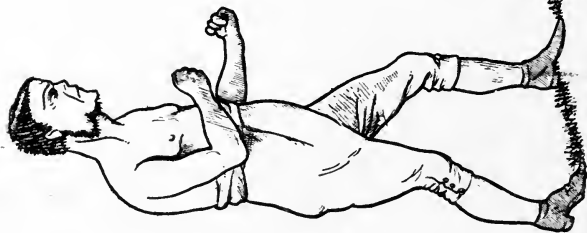
One of the most popular drawings on the subject depicted a kind of prize fight with Charles Morton, as a very light weight, valiantly doing battle with Weston, who was shown as a very heavy weight. Morton, described as the "Canterbury Pet," was seen seconded by the often before-mentioned "Ferdy" Jonghmanns—several singing scions of whom are now very popular on our variety stage. Weston, in the picture, had for his henchman that other popular sturdy-voiced singer, Pat Corri. This pugilistic picture is herewith reproduced.

Notwithstanding the machinations of sundry rivals, Mr. Morton contrived to open the Oxford with a "grand inaugural concert," on March 19th, 1861. The programme was of a high class kind, and included Mr. Santley, Mlle. Parepa, Miss Poole, Levy the cornet player, F. Jonghmanns, Edward Marshall, and A. B. Hollingsworth.

Of the principal members of the Oxford's opening company, Mr. Santley is perhaps the only, and certainly the principal, survivor. At the time of writing, the veteran



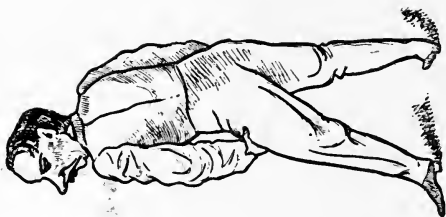
Pat Corri
(Weston's Musical Director).



Edward Wesfon.



Charles Morton.



Herr Ferdinand Jonghmanns
(Morton's Musical Director).

GALLANT FIGHT FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE W.C. DISTRICT BETWEEN THE CHAMPION
AND THE CANTERBURY PET FOR TEN THOUSAND A YEAR !!

baritone is still in fine voice, with excellent physique to match. The cornet soloist, Levy, passed over to the great majority not so very long ago, and so did that beautiful-voiced soprano, Miss Russell. Of the two comic singers concerned on this occasion Hollingsworth continued to be popular for a few years in the London halls, especially at that some time defunct resort, the "Sun," at Knightsbridge, but Marshall continued his comicalities for a good many years later, one of his principal impersonations being the Widow dei Franchei in Henry J. Byron's burlesque, "The Corsican Brothers," which was one of the earliest productions at the lately demolished Globe Theatre. Some six years later Marshall bobbed up serenely under Manager Morton's sway at the Philharmonic, as will be seen. While preparing these pages, we learned of Mr. Marshall's death at the age of 79.

In somewhat later Oxford programmes several of the above-mentioned favourites were reinforced by other artistic entertainers. These included that excellent singer, Miss Fanny Harrison, wife of Mr. Isaac Cohen, one of whose daughters is married to the popular Irish vocalist, Mr. Albert Christian, and another is the wife of that renowned caterer, Mr. Joseph Lyons.



CHAPTER XV.

SOME EARLY OXFORD COMICS.

Mr. Morton's comedians and comic singers at the Oxford formed indeed a strong array. Among them was the late Jolly John Nash, who, after making an exceedingly nervous debut at this hall, became celebrated all over the world for his infectious laughing lyrics. In due course there came to these boards one who had been both a serious actor and a droll clown, namely, "the Great Vance," who started his comic-singing career with his "Slap, bang! Here we are again!" song, and who, after a series of often similarly catchy and often equally common-senseless carols, dropped dead on the stage of the since defunct Sun Music Hall, Knightsbridge, on Boxing-Night, 1888, while singing a judge's song called "Is He Guilty?" The death of the professionally-named Alfred Glanville Vance (whose private name was Alfred Peck Stephens) was deeply regretted, for he was not only a clever comedian, but also a man of much sterling goodness of heart. In proof whereof it may suffice to mention that the clergyman who officiated at his funeral avowed at the graveside that he owed his own reclamation from drink and degradation to poor Vance's earnest pleadings and persistent care! Those of us who chanced to be present at this comic singer's funeral will not readily forget that earnest preacher's pathetic but proud eulogy of his music hall friend and rescuer.

To the Oxford of the early days also came the late Fred French, whose best lyrical effort was "When these Old Clothes Were New," and who after signalled his retire-

ment into private life by taking a public house in Leeds. Likewise the earlier described Tom MacLagan, and William Randall, a funny singer and a fine fiddler, whose chief plaudits were won with such droll ditties as "Isabella with her Gingham Umbrella," "On the Sands," "The Lodging House Cat," and "The Hole in the Shutter." "Billy" Randall was, moreover, very successful in a clever monologue adapted from John Oxenford's adaptation, "The Porter's Knot," in which the Great Little Robson as Sampson Burr, had taken the town by storm a few years before.

There were also at the Oxford sundry dancing and "duetting" drolls, such as Duriah and Davis, John and Emma Warde, and John and Emma D'Auban. The John of each respective pair, anon, married each respective Emma, and formed an acting quartette. Mr. and Mrs. Warde have long disappeared from stage-life, but Mr. and Mrs. D'Auban are still in existence, and, with the assistance of their smart son, Ernest, are still preparing terpsichorean pupils for the stage, and "producing" all sorts of droll and picturesque dances. Moreover, the said Ernest is also stage-manager at Drury Lane.



HARRY LISTON.

Another Oxford comical comic of a pronounced Cockney type, was Harry Liston, who was wont to provide some excellent chances for the boys "in front" to "chorus" in such songs as "Ginger!" "Naughty Naked Cupid," and "The Tin-Pot Band," in which he clanged the accompaniment on certain tin plates which he wore all over him.

Liston is (or was a little while ago) still touring the provinces with a long-trying entertainment, entitled "Merry Moments." Another favourite here was Harry Rickards, who, after singing duets with a "serio" named Carrie Tudor, at such long-defunct halls as the Old Raglan, in the Theobalds-road, off Holborn, came as a single turn to Mr. Morton's new hall, when, appropriately enough, he warbled a ditty called "Oxford Joe." It was the other Oxford, however, that was indicated in this popular but not too-brilliantly-written lyric. Another of Rickards's successes here was "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines"—after whom a recent popular American play was named. Mr. Rickards is now the leading variety impresario in Australia, whereunto he has just returned, after a long sojourn in "the Old Country."



HARRY RICKARDS.

Doubtless, one of the most popular of the early Oxford's comic stars was George Leybourne, who, from being, as it was always understood, a hammerman at the big Engineering firm, Maudslay's, became one of the most eagerly watched stars in the then music hall firmament. A fine figure of a man was Leybourne almost up to the end of his meteoric career, which ended, together with his life, at the early age of forty-two. But for his own foolishness, or "Bohemianism," it might, humanly speaking, have ended at nearly twice that age. Leybourne was an attractive "Lion Comique"—as he delighted to be styled—"Taking the town," as the saying is—with "Champagne Charlie," "Mouse-traps," "Up in a Balloon, Boys," "If Ever I Cease

to Love," "The Little Eel Pie Shop," "The Lancashire Lass," "The Flying Trapeze," and a score of other always melodious, if sometimes senseless, songs.

But Leybourne was more than this. Whenever the fit took him he was a fine singer of sentimental or dramatic songs. Oftentimes he would stalk majestically on the stage, and when his expectant worshippers eagerly listened for some bacchanalian lyric, such as his "Woman and Wine" (set to the air of "La Sirène"), he would break forth into a serious ballad, and furthermore he would sing it through on what is called "straight fashion," before reverting to his "Lion Comique" type of entertainment.

Many stories might here be told of this handsome, hilarious petted "comique"—stories, say, of his strange pranks with his audience; his frequent lapses into interpolations that sometimes imperilled the licence of the hall concerned; of his occasional fondness for a dish or two of whelks, plus copious draughts of champagne from a pewter pot, and so forth.

One little narrative may, however, suffice to show Leybourne's eccentricity. He had been having an outing with a certain dissolute (and soon dead) young manager who had married (and neglected) one of the most charming and lovable young dancers of the day—a wife utterly devoted to him. Leybourne and his liquor-absorbing young friend had at length arrived at the lately-demolished Albion (opposite Drury Lane Theatre) just before "closing time."

Some of the well-off, but wobbly, little manager's friends had just started "guying" him for his characteristic uppishness when in his cups, and the subject of their "chaff" was inclined, in somewhat swaying fashion, to show fight.

"Never you mind, Harry!" quoth the "Lion Comique," grasping his little friend almost under his arm. "Don't you take any notice of such asses! If you haven't got any blooming brains, you've got a blooming lump more rhino than those who have!" And with this Leybourne suavely, but staggeringly, carried off his friend.



CHAPTER XVI.

SOME STRANGE OXFORD TURNS.

One of the most popular favourites at the Oxford of the early days was James Unsworth, a famous stump orator of whom a few mems. may here be made. It was while a friend of Charles Morton's was visiting a sister of John L. Hatton, the celebrated composer, that the lady saw some very beautiful feminine dresses being unpacked, and on asking whose lovely wardrobe it was, learned that the costumes were those worn nightly by a *gentleman*, namely, a female impersonator and negro comedian, who had just arrived from America with Mr. Hatton's sister's nephew. This nephew was the said James Unsworth, a very quaint personage, who, on being introduced a little later to Morton, was promptly engaged by him.

Many who are now in, or are approaching, the sere and yellow leaf, will doubtless remember that Unsworth was what was then and for sometime afterwards known as "A Stump Orator." His "props" were as few as they were simple; they consisted of one crazy table, one huge pewter beer mug, and one fearsome umbrella, of the kind carried by the Mrs. Gamps of the period, but subsequently adopted by that Shoe Lane "Glass of Fashion and Mould of Form," known to the habitable globe as "Ally Sloper." Unsworth chiefly used his "brolly" for banging his table withal, by way of punctuating certain more or less sage portions of his oration, of which the following excerpt is a fair specimen:—

"My dear friends—if I may call you so without risk of danger—allow me to remark that we are here to-day and gone yesterday! But where are we now? (Bang with the gamp). Am I right, or any other man? Talking of Man

reminds me that all you men, except myself, are made wrong, and I will prove it, with the proofiest proof. (Bang.) The human frame, if I may call it so, is a masterpiece of incongruous-gruousness-ness. We have feet, some of them two feet or more in size, and yet they tell us man is more like a monkey every day. Now what is a monkey? Is it a fish? No! Is it a fowl? By no means! Is it a good red-herring? It is not. A monkey is an inhabitant of Woods and Forests. Have we not seen splendid specimens of this kind of ape? (Bang.) Am I right, or any other man?"

Unsworth's oratorical wheezes soon got all over London, especially his query "Am I right?" his "Draper's Clerk," etc., and Charles Morton had no reason to regret the engagement, which, as we have pointed out, started so strangely. Like many another popular stage favourite, however, Unsworth anon drifted out of public ken and the variety places that knew him, knew him no more.

The other favourites at the new Oxford included Miss Kate Santley, who has for some years been landlady of the Royalty Theatre in Dean-street, Soho. At the Oxford, Miss Santley, then in her teens, made her first success with a servant's song, with the refrain, "The Bell goes a ringing for Sarah," and very sweet and dainty did the bonny Kate look in her slavey's garb. This song, which afterwards turned up in many a burlesque and pantomime of the period, was written by our late old friend, G. W. Hunt. Mr. Hunt was for many years known as "Jingo" Hunt, because he invented, or caused to be invented, the word "Jingo," in the once enormously popular war-ditty, "We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do." In this war-warble that very varied comedian, the late "great" Macdermott, achieved his most striking music hall success after a long course of acting in all sorts of parts, in all sorts of "Blood and Thunder" playhouses.

At this first Oxford there was also to be found poor old

Charles Bernard, who, before he took to provincial and touring management, was a strong favourite of Mr. Morton's company, scoring especially in the drinking song from "Martha," and Dibdin's ever-touching "Tom Bowling." In due course Bernard, and a female impersonator named Sylvester, started a negro minstrel troupe, and went a-touring therewith. While these darkey troubadours were in Scotland they were commanded to appear before the late Queen at Balmoral, when Bernard created such an impression upon our late beloved Sovereign by his singing "Just before the battle, mother," that the August Lady personally demanded an encore. Owing to this gracious mark of Royal favour, the troupe afterwards styled themselves the Royal Court Minstrels.

In after years poor old Bernard afterwards took to running Shakesperian companies round the country, more for his own pleasure than for profit. His last professional work, just before he died, was as acting manager of the Royal English Opera House, when the late Sir Augustus Harris took it over from the late Mr. D'Oyly Carte. Soon after that it became the Palace Theatre, of which more anon.



CHAPTER XVII.

SOME DARING EXPERIMENTS.

About this time at the Oxford Charles Morton began to give fresh proofs of that daring which we have noted more than once in connection with his management at the Canterbury. In addition to running his powerful company at both these halls on the same evening, by means of specially-chartered broughams, he next had the audacity to present at the Oxford the famous dance entitled the "Can Can," which became speedily the talk of London. This wild and whirling turn was first introduced at this resort by a troupe of dashing dancers, headed by that now famous extensive exhibition organiser, Imre Kiralfy, who was assisted by his brother Bolossy and two of their Hungarian sisters, one of whom, it was said, first introduced this saucy terpsichorean effect into the appropriately saucy city of Paris.

Of these three, Kiralfy's sister Aniola, certainly created the greatest sensation of the trio, for she would hold on to a certain post while brothers Imre and Bolossy would work her legs like pump handles, prior to her executing the most extraordinary gyrations and the highest high-kicking that had previously been seen on any stage—certainly on any stage in London. These eccentric choreographic proceedings, which quite startled and even shocked, certain of the more staid beholders, were, however, immensely popular with the great majority of the Oxford's patrons. They also certainly helped to mould, or to influence, a juvenile member of that same Oxford Company, namely, Sara Wright, afterwards called Mlle. Sara, who became such a high-kicker that some few years later she contrived to kick away the license of the Alhambra, where she was known as "Wiry Sal."

About this time, Mr. Morton's Oxford and Canterbury artistes included two ladies who afterwards became somewhat celebrated outside of the theatrical and variety professions. One was Louisa Crouch, a pretty girl, who was daughter of the composer of "Kathleen Mavourneen" and other famous ballads. Poor old Crouch, whose melodious airs have outlived him, lingered on until nearly a hundred years of age, when he died—a few years ago—almost in poverty, in that much-moneyed land, America. His daughter, Louisa, was more successful, financially, at least, for a time, for she became that most notorious of Parisian *demi-mondaines*, the extensively and expensively begemmed "Cora Pearl." Like that gorgeous Second Empire, however, wherein she was for a while so belauded and bejewelled, her downfall was soon complete.

One of the Oxford's cleverest young ladies, then a child, afterwards became that exceedingly brainy and bright serio-comic and burlesque actress, Nellie Power. Her songs, mostly "ladies' versions," as they were then called, of the popular ditties of George Leybourne and other "lion comiques" of the period, gained her considerable music hall renown, and caused her eventually to be engaged, for sundry important burlesques and pantomimes written by the late Henry J. Byron. Poor Nellie, as will be remembered, died at a comparatively early age, and of her it might truly be said, as the murderous Macbeth remarked on a certain memorable occasion, "She should have died hereafter." She made her last appearance about sixteen years ago at the Trocadero, which is now the famous restaurant of Lyons and Co.

Another of the Oxford's favourites was a very beautiful damsel named Alice Dunning, who soon afterwards blossomed forth as a very agile and alert singer and dancer, and later migrated to America, where she married the still surviving and now touring actor-manager, Mr. Horace Lingard. He, in the middle sixties, was a popular comic singer, whose principal ditty was a somewhat bald effusion called

"On the beach at Brighton." After her marriage with Lingard, Alice Dunning became a most beautiful and most pathetic tragic actress, and, after achieving considerable renown in the United States, she returned to England, and for some years was one of London's most honoured leading ladies. Many a playgoer will doubtless remember the sensation that this lovely woman aroused at a scratch Gaiety matinée by her debut as an actress in the old American (and worst) stage adaptation of "Camille." Her subsequent impersonations of the hapless heroine in "Called Back," and the persecuted wife in "A Woman of no Importance," will assuredly be remembered by most playgoers. Unhappily, Miss Lingard, as she was always billed theatrically, also died in the very zenith of her fame.

In the early days of the first Oxford, Mr. Morton introduced one of the first of the more startling forms of the flying trapeze act, which afterwards became so popular in other variety resorts, and he also arranged for a similarly terrifying turn at the Canterbury. The act at the Oxford was provided by Henri and Phau; the Canterbury trapezist was one Steckle, who is said to have been the first to turn a double somersault from the trapeze.

Another daring thing that the late Mr. Morton attempted at the Oxford was the introduction of a Saturday Matinée. He went so far as to announce one of these afternoon performances, but speedily was warned by the powers that were that the regulations in his license sternly stipulated that he could not open his hall before six o'clock on any evening. Some years afterwards, however, this invention of his was adopted there, and, of course, at a good many other principal variety theatres.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST OXFORD'S SAD END.

The new and lovely Oxford, which we have described in the preceding pages, was, alas, doomed to pass away in its infancy. It had not reached seven years of age, when one night it was, February 10th, 1868, to be exact, as Mr. Morton was making his usual tour of inspection of the hall after the performance, and was just going to bed, he noticed a peculiar and unusual light in the balcony. On making for this spot he discovered that several seats in that part of the house were burning. He at once endeavoured to extinguish this blaze, but soon found that it was overmastering him. At that moment the paint upon an adjacent column caught fire, and the flames, running madly up the column, ignited part of the roof. By then half-blinded with the smoke, and with his hands badly burned, he rushed to the door and gave the alarm.

Although the engines arrived in the shortest possible time, and at once got to work, the Oxford roof was already in a blaze, and before the firemen could make any impression upon the ravaging flames, that beautiful roof fell in. All the furniture and fixtures were rapidly destroyed. So were the expensive dresses and all the more or less valuable musical instruments which the respective players thereof had chanced to leave upon the premises after the performance. The only thing that resisted what penny a-line-ing reporters of the old-fashioned type loved to call "the devouring element" was the wonderfully well made "tongued floor," a fine piece of work. This same floor actually survived the fire that consumed the second Oxford some few years later.

For one thing, this unfortunate event was long famous,

namely, that it established the unenviable record of being the first fire that had ever destroyed a London music hall.

It so happened that Mr. Morton had by the time of this disaster sub-let the Canterbury to that energetic but eccentric entrepreneur, the late Mr. William Holland, who was then doing big business at that hall with the wonderfully daring rope walker, who called himself Blondin. Thus it was impossible to transfer the burnt-out Oxford artistes to the Canterbury. Therefore, the burnt-out manager set about endeavouring to secure a place where a benefit might be given in aid of the sufferers. After several rather delicate stratagems, he contrived to secure the Crystal Palace for that laudable purpose, and a huge benefit programme was given there about a month later.

The gigantic programme included contributions by the whole of the Alhambra artistes, ballet, chorus, orchestra, etc., by kind permission of the manager, Frederick Strange, who sent this vast crowd of entertainers down in ten omnibuses, generously defraying the whole of the expenses for the conveyance of his contingent. Most of the London proprietors and managers also sent along batches of popular entertainers, the aforesaid ever-kindly "Bill" Holland arranging to lend Blondin as the bright particular star of the afternoon. In due course the intrepid rope-walker—who, despite all predictions to the contrary, did *not* break his neck and dash himself to pieces, but perversely lived on to a great old age, dying comfortably in his bed a few years ago—betook himself to Sydenham Grounds to arrange the fixing of his high rope in order that he might airily funambulate from tower to tower, so to speak. The Crystal Palace management, however, informed Blondin that he could not be permitted to perform his feats at such altitude, owing to the terrible dangers of his exhibition, but that he might, if he chose, stretch his rope between the balconies and the centre transept. This comparatively safe

idea, however, was indignantly rejected by the great rope-walker, who seemed mostly to act upon the principle adopted by that celebrated ostrich, who never cared to project any knives, etc., into his "little mary" until all the blades had been properly opened.

It so happened that among the famous acrobats and gymnasts who had volunteered their intrepid services were Farini and his wonderfully daring son, who for some time in his early youth so successfully "spoofed" the variety public by representing himself as a girl athlete called "Lulu." This courageous aerial couple, finding Mr. Morton temporarily non-plussed by Blondin's refusal to appear unless he were allowed to risk his life, suggested that if Morton would pay for a three-quarter inch wire rope, and have it stretched across the lower balconies, they would disguise themselves respectively as Blondin and his man, and go through B's. great performance of carrying a man on his back across the rope, walking blindfold, with a sack over him, trundling a wheelbarrow, etc. All these feats the pretended Blondin and assistant duly performed as the jolly young waterman used to feather his oars, namely, with skill and dexterity, and to the immense delight of the vast audience, who were quite under the impression that the real Blondin had come along and "obliged," as originally announced.

All sorts of entertainments were given simultaneously in every part of the Palace grounds and interior, under the control of the respective managers, who had kindly provided them, including the long celebrated Nelson Lee, whose varied theatrical career first started as a purveyor of ghost and blood-and-thunder shows at the fairs.

More than 25,000 persons paid for admission to the Crystal Palace Oxford benefit, a wonderful assemblage when one considers that it was held in the somewhat boisterous month of March.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN AL FRESCO VENTURE.

Some little time after the Oxford sufferers' benefit at the Crystal Palace, Mr. Morton bobbed up "in another place," as they say in the House of Commons, showing even increased eagerness for work and feeling, doubtless the truth of Robert Browning's veracious statement :—

"When a man's busy, why leisure
Strikes him as wonderful pleasure !
But when at leisure once is he
Straightway he wants to be busy."

In point of fact, this manager arranged to open the North Woolwich Gardens, and open them he did on the Whit-Monday that followed the Oxford fire. There was a time it will be remembered, that whatever fête was put on there it was sure to rain tremendously during the whole time of the entertainment. So much so that this resort became known as the regular abiding place of Jupiter Pluvius. For some time during Mr. Morton's tenure, however, the Gentleman with the Watering Pot graciously stayed his hand, and for a time all went as merry as that marriage bell mentioned by the too much-married bard Byron.

Undismayed by the heavy blow which he had suffered by the destruction of the Oxford, Charles Morton set to work at North Woolwich with right good-will and characteristic courage. He had all the lovely flowers and trees of these Gardens put in proper arboricultural order, and the pathways strewn with fine sea-shells, which glittered like jewels in the sun's rays—whenever there was any sun to send those rays forth. All the different buildings in the Gardens were thoroughly overhauled, a new stage was put in the Concert Hall, and two magnificent dancing platforms

were added to the other attractions. To the usual concerts, given daily and nightly, there were tacked on what was then rare, namely, a Sunday Concert, of a very refined order.

For the usual week-day warblings, of course, many popular comic singers of the day were chartered, and in addition to the excellent musical programmes of this kind, there were to be found, both indoors and outdoors, quite a number of other entertainments. These included wondrous feats by the best acrobats, farces and ballets in the theatre, dancing on the two large platforms, and performances by sundry gymnasts who "flew through the air with the greatest of ease," as George Leybourne used to say in his then popular "Flying Trapeze" song.

An exceedingly picturesque feature at these Gardens was a painting representing the Heights of Magdala, and on one gala occasion, there was invited a number of Volunteers, who presented a fine mimic representation of the famous storming of those heights. What with the cannonading, the mortar-firing, the martial music, and the inevitable "grand display of fireworks," the whole scene was both interesting and animated. The hoisting of the Union Jack was the signal for a striking *feu de joie*. The National Anthem was given by the massed military bands, which included six Volunteer contingents, besides the two extensive bands belonging to the Gardens.

Speaking of the Volunteers' visit to North Woolwich Gardens, it will to many be interesting to note that both Manager Charles Morton and his brother, William (who, of course, assisted him in this *al fresco* enterprise) had a good deal to do with the development of the Volunteer system, then comparatively in that state in which Charles Dickens's holiday maker described Steam—to be—namely, "only in its infancy." It is a great credit to both Mortons, that at a time when the Volunteer idea was much decried and sniffed at, they gave frequent valuable assistance to the officers engaged in the promotion of that system. In point

of fact, William Morton, after being in the ranks of the First Surrey Artillery Volunteers, soon became a senior sergeant, then second-lieutenant, and anon first lieutenant thereof.

Harking back awhile to North Woolwich Gardens, it should be added that during the last three months of Mr. Morton's season thereat continual success resulted. Unlike the time when poor William Holland held the sway there, good old Sol thought fit to shine for an extensive period every day, and the said Holland's relentless foe, Jupiter Pluvius, appeared to be enjoying what professionals call "a well-earned rest." As the autumn shades drew nigh, Morton prepared two mammoth fêtes to last two days and two nights. For these grand events the Gardens were decorated with all sorts of flags, national and otherwise, many of which were borrowed from the other Woolwich's Arsenal and Dockyard.

But lo! at the very hour of starting the first of these gigantic entertainments, Manager Morton's North Woolwich luck suddenly changed! The rain began to pour down in such torrents as though it had made up its mind to make up for the three months during which it had been "resting." The tents were soaked through and through, and the once proud flags clung in soaked fashion to the flagstuffs. Although there was no shadow of a suggestion that the deluge would abate, the Manager, being always of a most punctual turn of mind, had the Gardens opened at the moment of the time originally announced. For a long while, not a visitor hove in sight, but in due course some few arrived. As yet, however, there was no indication of the coming of the artistes, or of the members of the orchestra. Nothing daunted, the Manager took ferry over to South Woolwich, and there contrived to secure from his military and other friends a sufficient number of skilful instrumentalists to form a full-sized band.

Of course the outdoor shows, and especially a grand balloon ascent, which had been arranged, had to suffer

according to the line spoken by poor King Lear on a similar wet and stormy occasion, and "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm." Some few hours later the rain and the wind began to simmer down, and the gallant æronaut at once proceeded to carry out his contract. Amid the cheers of what, under less moist circumstances, would have been the multitude, the balloon went up, and later it was discovered that it had descended many miles away. In due course, however, the bold balloonist returned to the Gardens and proceeded to make arrangements for the second Mammoth Fête.

To the general joy of all concerned, at the starting of this fête the sun again shone out, and the gigantic programme was carried out to the letter, and in the presence of a huge gathering. This programme, it may be mentioned, included a performance of John Gay's famous play, "The Beggar's Opera," the enormous success of which at the time of its production by Manager Rich, in the reign of good Queen Anne (since deceased), gave rise to the celebrated quip that it "Made Rich gay and Gay rich."

This was the last fête given by Mr. Morton at these once historic Gardens. For awhile he thought of trying his fortune there again, but when the balance-sheet came out, and when he also found that so much more would have to be expended before any greatly beneficial result could be hoped for, he resolved to quit, rather than to risk all his resources on so inevitably precarious a venture, and one so utterly at the mercy of the elements.

It has to be remembered that enterprises of this sort are run nowadays under certain better conditions than then prevailed. For example, even at that wonderful amusement-resort, Blackpool, it is so arranged that all the entertainments concerned can (if necessary) be given under cover, so vast are the buildings concerned. At North Woolwich, of course, there was no such provision against unpropitiousness of weather.

"Blissful Blackpool"—as some call it—has many a huge

dancing hall capable of providing "light fantastic toe" room for at least ten thousand lovers of what Dick Swiveller calls the "mazy."

Alas! in a climate so changeable (or shall we say so unmonotonous) as that of the British Isles, one would be unable to use that droll witticism which was cracked, all unconsciously, by the late American manager, John Stetson, who was as indefatigable as he was illiterate. It was during a very hot snap in New York that the kind-hearted, but temporarily non-plussed Stetson made the following remark:—

"What's the airthly good of givin' any theatrical shows in this city during this confounded 'orrid 'eat? Nothing will just now make any success but them — al fiasco shows."



CHAPTER XX.

A MUSIC HALL TRANSFORMED INTO A TEMPLE OF THE
DRAMA.

After the closing of North Woolwich Gardens, Mr. Morton imitated the method of Brer Rabbit and "lay low and said nuffing." At all events, he managed nothing.

But it chanced that one day, while Charles Morton was casting around for fresh opportunities for developing his managerial views, he met another Charles. This was Charles Head, then one of the largest bookmakers on the Turf. Quoth Head to Morton: "I have loaned £2,000 on a fourth mortgage of the Philharmonic Music Hall at Islington. How shall I get it back?" Morton responded by asking Head to come with him to his legal adviser, the aforesaid Frederick Stanley, which Head did promptly, and explained his position. Mr. Stanley pointed out that under the circumstances, a fourth mortgage was of little use, but that if Head cared to throw good money after bad he might be able to acquire the first mortgage that was upon the lease. After sundry negotiations, Mr. Head paid to Mr. Stanley the necessary amounts, and acquired not only the necessary mortgages, but also the power to sell. The property was subsequently put up for auction, and was eventually knocked down to Morton.

This manager, being now in full possession of the Philharmonic, advertised for estimates for re-decorating, re-seating, and, indeed, for thoroughly renovating the building. Upon reflection, however, it occurred to him that to open the place upon its old lines would be to court disaster. Therefore he held a consultation with his friend, Mr. Vandervell, and brother William, and the result was a proposition to build a new stage in lieu of the old platform

which had so long done duty when the Philharmonic was a mere music hall.

So on Monday, October 17th, 1870, the transmogrified Philharmonic opened with Charles Morton as proprietor; W. H. Morton as assistant manager; M. Henri de Villiers as musical director and composer; P. W. Halton as conductor of the orchestra; Cecil Hicks as pianist; Albert Calcott as scenic artist; and J. Cormack as ballet master. The prices of admission were as follows:—Balcony, 6d.; Stalls and Promenade, 1s.; and private boxes, 10s. and 15s.

Before referring to the opening programmes of Mr. Morton's first theatrical venture, it should be stated that his manifestoes included the following grateful and comforting announcement:—"The magnificent bowling alleys and billiard saloons attached to this establishment are open day and night." Thus, with all sorts of entertainments and pastimes intended for the delectation of all sorts of people, Manager Morton made his first "regular theatre" out of a faded music hall, which had long been known locally by such endearing titles as "The Dust Bin" and "The Spittoon."

It was at the old pre-Mortonian "Phil." or some such house, that a well-known touring manager met with a strange experience which he often still relates. On reaching this theatre just before starting a week he had booked there, he discovered that he would have to borrow a scene or two for his play. He mentioned this to the ancient playhouse's resident-manager, who promised to lend him whatever he needed.

"Come with me, and select what you want," he said, and took him along to a vast old barn hard by. This barn was so crammed with scenery of all sorts that the touring-manager asked in amazement where it all came from.

"Oh!" softly replied the resident-manager. "Nearly all the companies that come here have to leave their scenery behind to pay their exes.!" *Tableau!*

CHAPTER XXI.

MORTON AGAIN AS A LAW-BREAKER.

The principal feature of the opening entertainments at the "Phil." was a fairy-burlesque, entitled "Prince Love," chiefly enacted by Miss Clara Vesey and the Sisters Laura, Nellie, and Fanny Fay. This harmless piece of pleasantry lasted perhaps fifty minutes all told. In due course, there were given, among other things, costume recitals, or extracts from Hervé's "Chilperic," Offenbach's "Grand Duchess," and so on. In point of fact, except, perhaps, that a few of these operatic "samples" were somewhat longer than of yore, there was little to differentiate Mr. Morton's new Islingtonian venture from the programmes which he had been giving for twenty years previously at the Canterbury, and later at his magnificent new Oxford.

But, notwithstanding the apparent harmlessness of the Philharmonic programme, this adventurous managerial spirit speedily found himself again cast for the villainous rôle of Law-Breaker. As at the Canterbury, some fifteen years earlier, so the bold Morton, having aroused afresh the jealousy and envy of certain full-blown theatrical managers, was charged with having dared to produce stage-plays in a music-hall!

The impenitent accused at once consulted his solicitor (and brother-in-law), Mr. Frederic Stanley, and it was decided to withdraw the operatic excerpts, etc., *pro tem*. It was also resolved, in consequence of the way in which Mr. Morton was continually being harassed by his envious theatrical managerial brethren, that he would forthwith fight that belligerent body on their own ground, so to speak. Possessing, as he did, a managerial clean bill of

health, with no complaints against him, but those from these vexatious managers, in due course he laid his case before the Lord Chamberlain of the period, and applied for a full theatrical license for the Philharmonic.

Before such license could be granted, however, the official architect was sent to inspect the hall and its appurtenances. That official, after a most careful scrutiny, principally confined his requisitions to decreeing the removal of the refreshment tables from the floor of the hall. When asked if the refreshment bar at the back of the pit would have to be removed, he replied "No, we only wish the refreshments to be subservient to the entertainment." So the pit bar remained, thereby affording a striking contrast to the refreshment prohibiting policy adopted of late years in connection with certain new theatrical and variety temples.

During the time occupied in making these alterations, Manager Morton reverted to his former type of music-hall entertainment, contriving to draw therewith large audiences to the Philharmonic. This matter also much exercised the minds of his aforesaid theatrical foemen. Miss Emily Soldene, who had been concerned in the forbidden operatic selections, continued a member of the "Phil." Company, and, together with the sweet-singing Miss Russell, brought from the Canterbury and Oxford, contributed ballads during part of each evening, sometimes joining in a series of National airs.

As this was the time when the Franco-Prussian War began to be in full blast, these national airs, of course, included the "Marseillaise" and "Die Wacht am Rhein." At this theatre, as at many another during that unhappy period, these selections always created an enormous sensation, and it will be well within the memory of many that night after night volcanic demonstrations and counter-demonstrations were evoked by these rousing war-songs.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE "PHIL." AS THEATRE.

When Mr. Morton opened the Philharmonic Theatre, formerly the Philharmonic Hall, his shrewdness was again shown by the fact that, in order that there might be no misunderstanding as to that entertainment building's status, he first of all engaged his old friend, the late John Baldwin Buckstone, to present there a series of his most popular farces. These pieces included "Box and Cox," "Lend me Five Shillings," "Grimshaw, Bagshaw, and Bradshaw," and "To Paris and back for Five Pounds." Buckstone, of course, played the leading parts in these.

In due course, Tom Taylor's then popular farce, "To Oblige Benson," was given, and this revival was especially noticeable for the fact that Miss Soldene, eschewing operatic vocalisation for the nonce, appeared in the character of Mrs. Trotter Southdown. Later a sketch, based on "Chilperic," and a short version of "the Grand Duchess," were again given, with Miss Soldene in the name-parts. About this time Mr. Morton engaged a troupe of female minstrels; Louie Sherrington, a then popular serio-comic; an operetta company, who played "The Happy Village"; Herr Schultz, with his remarkable "Masks and Faces" entertainment; and that late old-time tragedian of the city, Clarence (otherwise "Joe") Holt, who delivered, in his most sonorous manner, a strange combination — Shakesperian entertainment, which he entitled "All the World's a Stage."

The great success which attended Mr. Morton's reproduction of the condensed versions of "Chilperic" and "The Grand Duchess," led to a demand by his patrons for longer versions of those pieces. In the first-named, Miss Soldene

and her sister, Miss Clara Vesey, again appeared, but this time the company was strengthened to include John Rouse, Edward Marshall, and J. B. Rae, all droll low-comedians. Felix Bury, a very attractive tenor, and Miss Selina Dolaro, a sweet-singing and beautiful little Jewess, whose name afterwards loomed so large at several other playhouses, and whose portraits throughout her all too short career were wont to fill the photographic shop windows of London.

There were many "pages" in this later version of "Chilperic," and these were played by a group of very lovely ladies, whose more or less pronounced form of "principal boy" costume became the talk, not only of Merrie Islington, but of a considerable portion of this more or less merrie Metropolis. Several of these page-impersonators (whose front-names were less "Lottie-ish" and "Tottie-ish" than those adopted by later chorus-ladies) afterwards rose to some distinction in the theatrical profession, a kind of fate which seems to have been not at all uncommon with the actors and actresses who were brought out by the subject of this biography.

There was at the Philharmonic Theatre another piece which attracted a good deal of attention. This was "The Nightingale's Wooing," a droll musical extravaganza written by Arthur Rushton and Frank Arlon. The music was by W. C. Levey, then the musical director of Drury Lane Theatre, and the composer of many popular melodies, including the long-whistled "Esmeralda," which he wrote about the same time for the Adelphi drama called "Notre Dame." "The Nightingale's Wooing" had some beautiful scenery by Albert Callcott; and the three principal characters were thus described and cast: "Prince Nightingale (a young man of note, we may say of several, and naturally addicted to the jug); Miss Hetty Tracey; Princess Rosebud (a young lady of scents, and, though fond of a lark, still fonder of a Nightingale), Miss Clara Vesey; and Baron Snail (a villain and a coward—no good at a pinch of salt—who gets his deserts rather late in the day, and finds

—but we anticipate) Mr. W. Vernon.” Such was the habit of description indulged in by programme-makers of the period, and, indeed, continued for some years later by that arch punster, Henry J. Byron, and his many imitators. Hetty Tracey and Clara Vesey, both possessing what police-court reporters still delight to call “considerable personal attractions,” were supported by twelve equally charming ladies, who played what might for the most part be called “thinking” Roses. These Roses were labelled respectively Moss, China, Wild, Sweet, White, Red, Blush, Yellow, Musk, Mignon, Trailing, and Damask.

It was during the run of the somewhat longer version of “Chilperic” at the “Phil.” that Mr. Morton made a most peculiar engagement, and he made it by accident, so to speak. What was known as the Colonna Troupe of Dancers had just come from the Continent to the London Alhambra, where they introduced that acrobatic, but scarcely over-graceful form of eccentric choreography which has since become so general on our theatrical and variety stages. What Madame Colonna’s troupe then did in the way of “high-kicking” would doubtless appear to many nowadays as of no particular altitude. It so chanced, however, that one of these Colonna syrens was wont to throw her leg above her head! This shocking accomplishment drew down upon her—or rather upon the Alhambra management—severe denunciation. And lo! upon that management applying for a renewal of the license it was refused! The Alhambra was closed forthwith!

The Colonnas were not the only sensational troupe of dancers introduced by Mr. Morton at the Philharmonic. Sometime later in his management thereof he engaged Les Clodoches, a quartette of burlesque terpsichoreans, whose extraordinary contortions created roars of laughter nightly, not only at the “Phil.” but at Covent Garden. The so-called “Clodoche,” the leader of the troupe, was a sort of Spring-Heel Jack of the period, who, with his confreres,

had created much excitement among the Parisians of the Second Empire.

When they came to London this troupe received £320 per month, and their engagements went on until the Franco-Prussian War broke out, when Clodoche stopped the flinging of his nimble legs around himself and his comrades, and, with his breast full of proper patriotism, returned to France to assist in fighting his country's foe. Like many another patriot, however, he was badly served at the finish, for during the subsequent Commune the brave Clodoche was robbed of his savings, which amounted to some eighty-thousand francs. He was, therefore, compelled to take to dancing again, and he kept on until about the middle of the eighties. Les Clodoches included three comrades, whose respective stage names were Flageolet, La Comete, and La Normande, the two last named young fellows were dressed as ladies and the first two as mere men. It would be difficult to describe in print the effect of their eccentric gyrations in such dances as their "L'Oeil Crevé" Quadrille.

While upon the Terpsichorean theme, it may here be mentioned that, owing to the usual stipulation which was then found in all the Lord Chamberlain's Theatre Licenses, namely, that no performance could be given on Ash Wednesdays, the busy-brained Morton started at the Philharmonic a series of Ash Wednesday Balls. In order to insure these gatherings being kept as select as possible, admission was by ticket only.

At the first of the dances, however, some evil-disposed person or persons endeavoured to mar the general harmony by sprinkling cayenne pepper over the dancing floor! This, of course, soon set everybody coughing and sneezing, and, indeed, created general annoyance and disgust. On learning what was the matter, the "Phil's." manager came on to the stage, expressing his regret and contempt at such a dastardly act, and offered a reward of fifty pounds to anyone who could point out the cowardly culprit. Happily

for the scoundrel, no one divulged his name. If he had been discovered undoubtedly he would have been treated much in the same fashion as certain race-course habitués treat welshers. The top cloth of the dancing floor was speedily removed, and the dancing was resumed and went on merrily to the "wee sma' hour ayont the twal."



CHAPTER XXIII.

A GREAT OPERATIC SUCCESS.

During the "Chilperic-Colonna" period at the "Phil." its manager received a visit from that powerfully-built, but seldom too-politeful stage-manager and librettist, Henry Brougham Farnie, who had booked himself to embark the next day or so for America with Miss Lydia Thompson's troupe of Burlesque Blondes, for which company he had written one or two travesties. Farnie had discovered a French comic-opera, with music by Offenbach. This opera was entitled "Genevieve de Brabant," and Farnie was so sweet upon it that he declared that it would make the fortune of anyone who would produce it. He suggested that if Morton would take the piece, he would cancel his American voyage, and would stay behind to prepare the adaptation. He produced pictures of two comic Gendarmes and of Drogan, the baker-boy hero, and very soon an arrangement was made to produce the opera. Farnie, however, was a bit staggered when Morton, in his quiet, far-seeing manner, insisted that this tenorial baker-hero should be played, not by a tenor, as in the original, but by Miss Soldene. After a good deal of argument, the manager carried his point.

"Geneviève de Brabant" was produced at the Philharmonic on November 10th, 1871, with the following players in the principal parts:—Miss Emily Soldene, Drogan, the pastry-cook; Miss Clara Vesey, Oswald, the Duke's peculiar page; Miss Selina Dolaro, Genevieve; Miss Marie Clifton, the confidante brigitte; Miss Katie Lee (sister to Miss Jennie "Jo" Lee), as a saucy "Esquire"; John Rouse, as Cocorico, Duke of Brabant; J. B. Rae, as the Burgomaster of Curacao; E. Loredan, as Charles Martel; E. Lewens, as Golo, Minister of Police;

and Felix Bury and Edward Marshall, as the two Gendarmes, Pitou and Graburge. As in the case of "Chilperic," so there were engaged a dozen or so of very fetching damsels for what may be called the "meditative" characters.

Notwithstanding all sorts of handicapping, the worst, of course, being the then dangerous illness of our present gracious King, "Genevieve de Brabant" caught on at once.

The musical numbers of "Genevieve de Brabant" quickly became the rage of the town. For quite a year and a half the Philharmonic was crowded to suffocation, and all the whistlers in the Metropolis soon began whistling Miss Soldene's "Sleep" song and the Gendarmes' duet, entitled "We'll run 'em in."

Although these two Gendarmes were, of course, French, yet their representatives, the aforesaid Bury and Marshall—the latter being the Canterbury's comic singer of nearly twenty years earlier—contrived to introduce



Photo Lafosse, Manchester.

MISS CLARA VESEY.



Photo Lafosse, Manchester.

MISS SOLDENE AS DROGAN.

verses concerning all sorts of English topics of the day, such as Robert Lowe's Match-tax, which so soon came to an inglorious end, the eccentricities of the Budget of the period, and, of course, Princess Louise's marriage to the



THE TWO GENDARMES.

then Marquis of Lorne, which had taken place in that year. This was as favourite a theme with the comic-singers of the period as "Pulex Irritans" and "Lodgers" have been

for some years past. This Gendarmes' duet was, indeed, a craze, and the two singers thereof thought it a quiet evening if they did not have to give more than a dozen encore verses.

This extraordinary duet was thus more or less brilliantly introduced by the two gendarmes, Graburge and Pitou :—

Grab : We're public guardians, bold yet wary.

Pitou : And of ourselves we take good care !

Grab : To risk our precious lives we're chary

Pitou : When danger looms, we're never there !

Grab : But when we meet a helpless woman—

Pitou : Or little boys that do no harm—

Grab : We run them in !

Pitou : We run them in !

Grab : We run them in.

Pitou : We run them in,

We show them we're the bold Gendarmes.

Grab : We run them in !

Pitou : We run them in !

Grab : We run them in,

We run them in,

We show them we're the bold Gendarmes !

Grab : Sometimes our duty's extra mural

Pitou : Then little butterflies we chase !

Grab : We like to gambol in things rural—

Pitou : Commune with Nature face to face !

Grab : Unto our beat then back returning,

Pitou : Refreshed by Nature's holy charm,

Grab : We run them in !

Pitou : We run them in !

Grab : We run them in.

Pitou : We run them in,

We show them we're the bold Gendarmes.

Grab : We run them in !

Pitou : We run them in !

Grab : We run them in,

We show them we're the bold Gendarmes

Encore verse.

Grab : If Gentlemen will make a riot

Pitou : And punch each other's heads at night,

Grab : We're quite disposed to keep it quiet

Pitou : Provided that they make it right !

Grab : But if they do not seem to see it

Pitou : Or give to us our proper terms !

We run them in, etc

The reader is requested to note that the exigencies of the time demanded a repetition of "We'll run 'em in" five times. This was probably on the principle which (according to the Poet Browning) is adopted by the Thrush, who, says Robert,

' Sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture !'

West End play-goers who had never been to Islington before now flocked there in large numbers. Among these visitors were many distinguished personages, including Lord Dunraven, who was then rather stage-struck, and who subsequently took a few theatres on his own account. Moreover, for the first time in the history of the Philharmonic Royalty began to patronise it. Towards the end of this opera's long run, our present Monarch, by then recovered from the terrible illness above mentioned, went one evening and took all his suite.

After the then Heir Apparent's visit "Genevieve" became even more the vogue. Offers began to pour in from all the leading provincial managers, and, when the piece had run for nine months, Mr. Morton booked a tour, taking in Brighton, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Nottingham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast, and Dublin. When "Genevieve" returned from these country travels, it went on at the Philharmonic for another twelve months. It started its fresh career at a newly-carpeted and newly-decorated playhouse, to which had been added a very noble orchestra for fifty performers, which were found very useful at a series of grand promenade and other concerts.

There was one other little adventure in connection with the Philharmonic which might be mentioned. It was while the above-mentioned two Charles's were, as brethren, dwelling together in unity, that Morton, at the suggestion of Head, arranged to take himself and his company to see

the Leger run. Having always an eye for the main chance, and finding that business was a little slack in London, Morton thought he might as well connect a little commerce with the outing. He, therefore, closed the Philharmonic for a week and took the Doncaster Theatre for that period from the late Captain Disney Roebuck. It was the year that "Hannah" won the Leger, and not long after the race the Philharmonic's shrewd manager did another smart stroke of business in getting the victor's owner, Lord Rothschild, to give his patronage to a performance at the Doncaster Theatre the next night.

It has to be recorded, however, that the Doncaster theatrical experiment did not pan out any too well financially; doubtless, because the natives and the visitors were all too intent upon the "Sport of Kings."

It was evident that some of the company regarded the journey as quite a foreign expedition, for several of the ladies were heard to remark on returning from Yorkshire that they were "glad to be back in England."



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PHILHARMONIC CONCERTS.

During the long tour of "Genevieve de Brabant" around the British provinces, Mr. Morton's recently-mentioned arrangements for a series of concerts at the Philharmonic Theatre did not bear good financial fruit. The entertainments were, indeed, deserving of a better result, for the manager, as was his wont, had taken care to provide the best of vocalists and instrumentalists. These included the late sweet-voiced tenor, Joseph Maas, whose early death was so much deplored; Edward Rosenthal, so valuable in comic opera; E. Nordblom, who made such a success in "La Fille de Madame Angot"; E. L. Hime, who, as before stated, was at the Old Canterbury; M. P. Foster, an excellent musical entertainer; and Mdlle. Carlotta Tasca, the late gifted pianist and instructor, who afterwards became the wife of the late Mr. Alfred Plumptre.

A noticeable event with regard to these concerts was the appearance there of the late Arthur Sketchley, with his side-splitting monologue, "Mrs. Brown at the Play," and of the now George Grossmith, Sen., who was then George Grossmith, Jun. This Mr. Grossmith was engaged at this time (thirty-two years ago) in the day in assisting his father (also an eminent lecturer and entertainer) in reporting the principal police cases at Bow Street and elsewhere. In the evenings George, Jun., would go to this or that hall or institute making highly humorous and happily successful attempts to "follow in his father's footsteps," as Miss Vesta Tilley's song says. The then boyish G. G.'s. chief contribution at the Philharmonic was a quaint musical sketch, entitled "Theatricals at Thespis Lodge." But even he, ambitious as he then was, probably did not foresee that



Photo W. Broughton & Sons.]

GEORGE GROSSMITH.

years afterwards he would be again with Mr. Morton, this time at the Palace Theatre, at a salary at least thirty times as large as that received at the Philharmonic!

Mr. Grossmith, a chartered wag, once impersonated the late Sir Henry Irving—not in stage-mimicry—but in the street. It was while the great actor (meaning, of course, Irving) was playing at a certain renowned provincial playhouse, and a vast crowd was waiting outside his hotel to “hooray” him. “G. G.,” who was staying at the same hotel, thought he would relieve his eminent friend from this wholesale scrutiny for once, so, pulling up his collar and pulling down his hat, he stalked out to his cab, in the accepted Irving manner. His reception was overwhelming. Of course, by the time Sir Henry came out, the huge crowd had all but dispersed, and he was only greeted with about a couple of cheers!

When Irving heard of “G. G.’s.” trick, it reminded him of a similar occurrence of the first night of his splendid revival of “The Corsican Brothers” at the lately “music-halled” Lyceum. Mr. Arthur Wing Pinero, now the distinguished dramatist, was then a comparatively minor member of Irving’s company, and in face and figure he somewhat resembled the “Chief.” He was cast for the character of Alfred De Meynard, who opens the piece. On the curtain rising, the audience took him for Irving, and made the historic house ring again and again with their mighty “reception.” Pinero did not know which way to look, and was so startled that for a while he could not speak. Anon, when the tremendous greeting subsided, he found his voice, and it was at once discovered that it wasn’t Irving.

When the “Chief” did make his entrance, as Fabien dei Franchi somewhat later, the audience doubtless, fearing that they might “spoof” themselves again, gave him a comparatively cool reception.

One of Mr. Morton’s great stars was Mrs. Howard Paul, whose original stage name was Miss Featherstone. Mrs.

Paul was a very remarkable woman, and she had a very remarkable contralto voice. This enabled her not only to be of great value in all sorts of sketches and operas, but also in the entertainments which were given some years previously by her and her still-surviving husband. She would indulge in a series of extraordinary imitations, among them being a life-like one of the late Sim Reeves.

Perhaps one of the most striking performances given by this versatile lady was that at Drury Lane Theatre towards the end of the "sixties," when she not only splendidly played the character of Lady Macbeth, but also enacted the character of the Witch-Monarch Hecate, and sang all the principal numbers of Locke's melodious "Macbeth" music, which, as before remarked in this volume, fell into disuse because of its being considered full of ill-omen for all taking part therein. Many old staggers will also remember that Mrs. Howard Paul was, a few years before these Philharmonic Concert days, a very fine exponent of the name part in Offenbach's opera, "The Grand Duchess," and of many other very trying dramatic and musical characters.

Another welcome wag at this theatre was James Hillier, a low-comedian and comic singer of real ability. Hillier first came under the notice of London playgoers at the Surrey Theatre in the low-comedy part in the tragedian Creswick's favourite melodrama, "The Idiot of the Mountain." He afterwards went through a course of burlesque and pantomime at sundry suburban theatres, and at the now extinct Surrey Gardens. He was a fine, well set-up, handsome fellow, and when during the early seventies he came out as a comic-singer in the halls, he was, both in appearance and in method, a very close rival to the then idolised George Leybourne. Hillier's favourite song about this time was "A Tickle in a Tunnel," in which song (and, alas, in several others) this admirable comedian fell into the then too prevalent cerulean method. While still a comparatively young man, and in the height of his popularity, poor Hillier dropped dead in the street some few years later.

With regard to the Philharmonic Concert Company, some few words might be added in conclusion regarding the aforesaid Arthur Sketchley. Sketchley was really the Rev. George Rose—a clergyman of the Church of England, but he afterwards “verted” to the Church of Rome. He was a highly-cultivated man, who in his youth had taken a very high degree at Magdalen College, Oxford. At the time he came to the Philharmonic, Sketchley had been giving his “Mrs. Brown” monologues for about ten years, and ten years later than this he died suddenly of heart disease.

Many of us have sat and listened to poor Sketchley’s droll recitals of the life and adventures of his famous heroine, the undaunted Mrs. Brown, who became so celebrated in the volumes entitled “The Brown Papers.” In this book, the quaint volcanic-tempered old lady recounted her visits to the play; to Queen Victoria at Balmoral and elsewhere, and her various views on the politics and other habits and customs of the period. Of course, the most popular of Mrs. Brown’s monologues among entertainment-goers was that descriptive of her Visit to the Play, especially as exemplified at that famous old blood-and-thunder playhouse which the good old lady named “Queen Wictoria’s Own Theaytre.” Some may recollect that it was during Mrs. Brown’s watching of a certain melodrama there that she became terribly excited during the scene of the attempted murder of the heroine in her bed-chamber by a more than usually blood-thirsty burglar. Also that, on a policeman in the pit calling the old lady to order, she denounced him roundly and demanded to know why he was not doing his duty by attempting to secure the would-be assassin upon the stage!

It will also be remembered that, during one of Mrs. Brown’s patronisings of the British Drama, and while accompanied by her usual bottle and egg-cup, which she carried for the purposes of light refreshment, she chanced to see the tragedy of “Hamlet.” This strange play worked on the poor old lady in a very strange manner. Naturally

she was much exercised at seeing a Ghost walk about indulging in long speeches in the middle of the night, and in the coldest of weather. And, being like the rest of her Sweet Sex, very tender and sympathetic on all matters concerning Love and lovers, in due course she expressed herself very warmly during the progress of the piece with regard to Hamlet's brutal behaviour to his sweetheart Ophelia.

When later this unkind young "hero" duly lectured his mamma so severely just before going to bed, Mrs. Brown arose in her seat in the pit and exclaimed to that young Prince, that if he had talked to *her* as he had done to his mother, she would have felled him to the earth if he 'ad been a 'undred!"



CHAPTER XXV.

THE "PHIL." AGAIN AS THEATRE.

After these interesting Promenade Concerts Mr. Morton brought "Genevieve de Brabant" back from the provinces, and once again the Philharmonic became the resort of the "swell" class of playgoers. Indeed, titled folk and other distinguished personages were even more numerous there than at the commencement of the run of this singularly successful comic opera. The "Phil." also became a rendezvous of leading members of the Stock Exchange of the period, and of many "noble sportsmen."

When "Genevieve de Brabant" thus resumed its run at the now beautifully decorated Philharmonic, there were but few changes in the cast, and these included Emily Muir (for Selina Dolaro) in the name part; Louise Henderson, as Captain of the Guard; Marie Clifton, as Brigitte; and the late M. Marius, who replaced Mr. Loredan as Charles Martel. With "Geneviève" there was also performed a new ballet invented by the celebrated maitre-de-danse, M. Dewinne, and entitled "Le Bosquet des Nymphs," also a new domestic comedy in which those long popular favourites, Rose Evelyn and the late Fred Mervin, appeared. This comedy was by the late H. T. F. Du Terreaux (long known as "Ghost" to Fannie), and was entitled "A Cabinet Secret."

Poor Marius (generally nick-named "Mons"), had not long returned from fighting for his native land against the Germans, for which plucky purpose he had gallantly resigned his engagement in "Le Petit Faust" at the Lyceum at the outbreak of that terrible war. On his return (after being reported "killed" at Metz) this handsome and vivacious young Frenchman soon regained his popularity with London playgoers, and this popularity he increasingly

retained until his death a few years ago. His chief success was made some years later at the Strand, especially in such volcanic characters as the fire-eating French warrior in "Nemesis" (also an adaptation by Farnie).

Many playgoers will remember Marius's quaint outbursts in this piece, in which he shared the honours with the even now merely-middle-aged favourite, Edward Terry. "What weapons do you choose?" quoth someone to the old warrior (Marius). "Cannons!" was his thundering reply. Later on, being with difficulty persuaded to go home to bed awhile to prepare for this impending duel, the old warrior yelled, "Yaas! I *will* to bed, but let me dream of Car-nage!"

In due course, namely, in March, 1873, Mr. Morton produced another comic opera at the Philharmonic. This was "Fleur-de-Lys," composed by Leo Delibes, and also adapted by Farnie, who does not appear to have been able to write a play "out of his own head."

The company included even a larger number than before of handsome and fine-limbed "pages," etc. In naming these characters the Farniesque form of humour was again laid under contribution, and such names as Mazagran, Vermouth, and Cassis were the rich result.

The music was melodious and the scenery and costumes were beautiful, even to gorgeousness; but "Fleur-de-Lys" (called in the original French "La Cour du Roi Petaud") failed to draw the public. In fact, the business dwindled down, down, down to nothingness. So Charles Morton, being satisfied with his previous three years' enormous success, resolved to end at one and the same time the run of "Fleur-de-Lys" and his management of the Philharmonic, which he had raised from a mere pot-house (so to speak) to one of the best-managed theatres in the Metropolis.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON DISSENSION AND DETECTIVES.

Morton's resignation of the lesseeship of the Philharmonic however, was not destined to pass off in too peaceful a manner. Just before the manager finally gave up the "Phil." his partner, Charles Head, the proprietor of the building, quarrelled with him, and, although the most harmonious relations had hitherto subsisted between the two Charles's, dissensions now ruled lively, and legal threats hurtled through the Philharmonic atmosphere. Indeed, the relations became as strained as those unfortunate aunts, who, according to Comedian Harry Nicholls's anecdote, were placed upon the rack by the Inquisition.

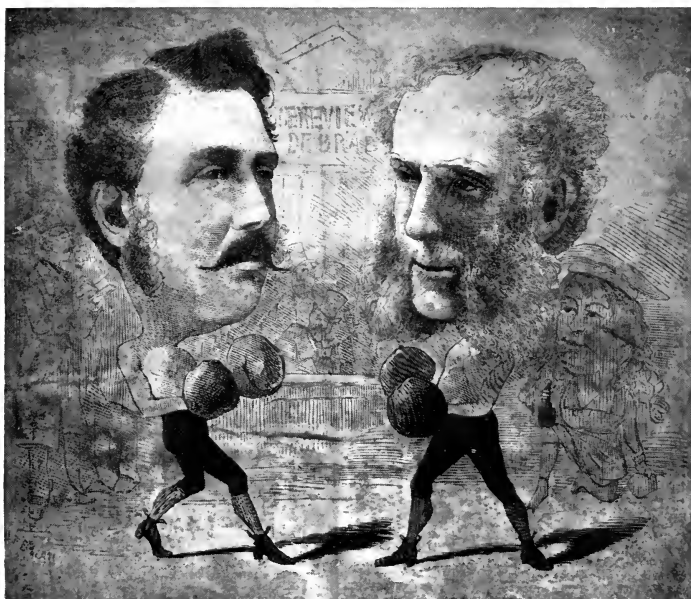
The trouble all grew out of Morton allowing Miss Soldene to play a few matinées at the old Gaiety. This actress had made it a rule not to play at night at the Philharmonic on the days when she had appeared at the Gaiety, and Head objected to an understudy doing duty at the Philharmonic.

The combatants, growing more and more obstinate, recourse was had to the Law, and a good deal of money which might have been better expended, passed into the pockets of certain legal luminaries. Many witnesses were called for each side, Morton's principal one being Miss Soldene herself. The upshot of this fresh forensic prize-fight, as one may call it, was a verdict for Morton.

As in the case of his famous set-to with Weston, of Weston's Music Hall, some twelve years before, so Morton and Head were depicted in pugilistic array, and the depiction, which was the work of the late universally beloved Alfred Bryan, is here set forth.

Just before leaving the Philharmonic the victorious defendant had another adventure, which brought him

within the purview of the Law, or, at all events, of one of its myrmidons. It fell out thus: Morton became deeply interested in a melodrama which was being written by a friend, so much so that he was prepared to finance the work. Naturally, much talk and many letters passed between the twain. It happened that on one occasion the toiling, moiling melo-dramatist used for his communication



MORTON AND HEAD IN COMBAT.
A "Box " at the Philharmonic.

one of the then new post-cards. On this missive were the following words:—

"I do not like the way in which you propose to kill Gertrude. It would be very clumsy, and, what is worse, easy to discover. There ought to be no clue of any kind. I propose that we shall poison her while she is at the picnic."

To this very obvious communication, Morton replied, on

another post-card: "Good! I think your proposed method of killing Gertrude much better than mine. Will join you presently."

A few hours later Morton was waited upon by a mysterious-looking person, who stated that his business was urgent. On being admitted the visitor silently closed the door, and kept close to the manager as though to pounce upon him at any moment. He "produced" the post-cards, and pointed out that Scotland Yard had instructed him to come and see into this business, as some crime was evidently intended. The managerial culprit, of course, explained, and laughed heartily at the strange mistake. It was some time, however, before the detective could detect the joke. Indeed, he still seemed inclined to go off and promptly arrest the other post-carding culprit!

This, of course, is but another instance of the way in which history—even theatrical history—repeats itself, for, as students of the older Drama will remember, those famous collaborators, Beaumont and Fletcher, were once arrested in the Borough for having been heard to plot a Royal murder, which, of course, they also intended for stage purposes!



CHAPTER XXVII.

SOME SURREY GARDENS SHOWS—AND A BIT ABOUT THE
“BRIT.”

Previous to Charles Morton's retirement from the Philharmonic his brother William, for the first time in his business career, left him in order to undertake a spell of management on his own account, namely, that of the Royal Surrey Gardens. Before leaving the Philharmonic, however, W. M.'s ancient friend, Teddy Marshall, the well-known comedian who has been so often mentioned in these pages, suggested to Brother Charles that this would be a fitting occasion to present Brother William with a testimonial. Charles consented, Marshall therefore organised a committee, and in due course presented the aforesaid W. M. with a handsome set of diamond studs and a note case containing one hundred guineas. The address accompanying these presents expressed high appreciation of William Morton's all-round abilities and uniform courtesy to all concerned. There was also a poetical present to W. M. from H. B. Farnie, whose lines are here set forth:—

Good-bye, old friend, we wish you well,
Who never wished another ill ;
And with our whole heart, need we tell,
We hope for your good future still.

'Tis something in this world of ours,
To meet a fairly balanced mind ;
Not wholly sweets, not wholly sour,
But ever even, always kind.

And this was ever true of you,
Tried by the tests of ups and downs ;
For all men in all seasons knew
Your smiles more often than your frowns.

So in the larger future years,
Many and fast friends may you find,
That happy fate your heart endears,
Whilst keeping those you leave behind.

Thus, accompanied with the best wishes of all his numerous friends, William Morton set up in business at the long vanished Surrey Gardens. He started on a really gigantic scale, and his programme included a burlesque entitled "Eurydice," or "Orpheé Aux Enfers," adapted for the English stage by W. F. Vandervell. There was a powerful cast, including that celebrated soprano, Miss Russell, as Eurydice, and the then fine-figured and much-idolised Miss Lennox Grey, as Orpheus, together with the chorus of fifty vocalists, and a ballet troupe one hundred strong. The orchestra was under the direction of the then well-known musician, Thomas Gough, and the stage was under the sway of the famous ballet-master, M. Milano.

The entertainments at the renovated Surrey Gardens commenced daily at three o'clock with a burnt-cork sketch entitled "Nigger Life in Ethiopia." This was followed by a "marvellous phenomenon" billed as "The Flight of Ariel." Then in due course came divers kinds of feats by vaulters, trapezists, globe-runners and walkers, strong men, tight and slack rope dancers, balloon-ascensionists, skate dancers, and what were then called "Velocipedians." From time to time there were aquatic tournaments, archery matches, side-show fortune-telling, bear performances, boating on the lake, illuminations, the inevitable swings, and the still more inevitable "Grand Display of Fireworks," with which the proceedings terminated.

It may be added that the dramatic company included such afterwards popular players as Denbigh Newton, Lizzie Marshall, Dot Robins, James Hillier, Charles Heywood, and the majestic Marie de Grey, who some years after her Gaiety "chorus" days blossomed forth as a tragedy queen. She died at an early age, regretted by all who knew her, for she was, indeed, a lady of extreme kindness of heart, and in no way soured by the fact that she did not in her tragic flights become quite a Sarah Siddons.

One of the most popular singers with Mr. W. Morton at the Surrey Gardens was Joseph Plumpton, father of the late and much-missed Alfred Plumpton, who was so long Charles Morton's musical director at the Palace Theatre. Joseph Plumpton had had rather a remarkable career, during which he became a member of the late Mrs. Sarah Lane's Company at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, where he played from some time in the middle fifties, until about the time he came to the Surrey Gardens.

"Joe," as he was mostly called, had a very beautiful tenor voice, and therefore it became a necessity that a song should be introduced for him into all the many new melodramas which had to be provided per annum at the "Brit." Most of these new melodramas were the work of Colin Hazlewood, father of the late H. C. Hazlewood (so long the popular manager and comedian of the Star Theatre, Wolverhampton, and a few similar playhouses), who was in turn the father of the present droll low-comedian, Mr. Bert Gilbert.

Many old stagers, such as the present writers, well remember that the first Hazlewood was wont to write the Britannia dramas at the rate of at least one per fortnight, and at the price of about a pound per act, which, after all, is not many shillings below the price that the far greater Douglas Jerrold received for some of his best plays.

It was amusing to note that whatever play was on at the "Brit.," about the middle thereof Joe Plumpton (who would never remove his thick, heavy moustache for any character whatsoever), used solemnly to stalk down to the footlights and give forth in the sweetest of tones some old-time favourite ballad. His especial pets were "Home, Sweet Home," "My Pretty Jane," and especially the then popular love song entitled "Tell me, Mary, how to woo thee!" a ditty of which the "Brit's." multitudinous patrons never seemed to tire. Sometimes Plumpton was turned on to sing some weirder warble which should be more in keeping

with the then prevalent Pepper's Ghost Illusion, which for several years was also compelled to be included in whatever play was submitted to Hoxtonians.

The good old tenor had even been known to stroll on, and, without rhyme or reason—or, rather, with less reason than rhyme—to pour forth the strains of some more or less up-to-date ballad in the middle of a Shakesperian play! It was always understood, however, that the said Shakesperian work should be one that possessed an “apparition”—if not several—in order that Pepper, like Plumpton, should not be wasted!

It should be noted that the Britannia was the first London theatre that ever went in for special Shakesperian “Birth Week” celebrations. The first “celebration” was given there in the Tercentenary Year, 1864—and it lasted six weeks, forsooth!



CHAPTER XXVIII.

MORTON AT THE GAIETY.

Ex-plaintiff Charles Head, after the previously-mentioned law-suit, elected to run the Philharmonic on his own account, engaging as his leading ladies Selina Dolaro and Julia Mathews (mother of Mr. J. W. Mathews, of the Duke of York's Theatre). Mr. Morton, therefore, joined his old friend, the late John Hollingshead, and in November of 1873 started a season at the old Gaiety. These politic managers opened their campaign with a version of "La Fille de Madame Angot," prepared by H. B. Farnie. At the same time Head was running at the Philharmonic another version by Henry J. Byron. The Gaiety cast of Lecocq's opera included many interesting names. In addition to Miss Soldene, Felix Bury, Clara Vesey, and Edward Lewens—all of whom had followed Morton from the "Phil."—there were in the company Annie Sinclair, a very popular vocalist, E. D. Beverley, a somewhat lengthy but lovely-voiced tenor, Richard Temple, so long afterwards at the Savoy; those two excellent "old women" actresses, Mrs. Henry Leigh and Miss Caroline Ewell, and the late Mr. J. G. Taylor. This "Madame Angot" troupe also included in its *chorus* that now important operatic vocalist, Mr. Ludwig.

It will be remembered by many that "La Fille de Madame Angot" became the rage of London, and that there were many heated arguments as to which was the better company, Morton's or Head's, and especially as to which was the better Madame Lange, Miss Soldene or Miss Mathews. The Gaiety version played to crowded houses for five weeks, when it had to be withdrawn therefrom owing to Mr. Hollingshead's long-booked arrangements. Before leaving the Gaiety, Mr. Morton had a benefit, and

for this performance of "La Fille de Madame Angot" he introduced the original Parisian Madame Lange, namely, Mademoiselle Desclauzes, a very handsome lady who made a great success in the part. During the Gaiety run of this opera it attracted many distinguished visitors from Royalty downwards. To many of these Royal and aristocratic visitors the very red revolutionary sentiments of "La Fille de Madame Angot" must have seemed very repellant, but whether or no, all the high-priced parts of the Gaiety were filled nightly during the run of the piece.

Morton next secured from Lord Dunraven a lease of the Opera Comique, where he revived the same opera, again in conjunction with Mr. Hollingshead, and with much the same cast as before, with the exception that Miss Pattie Laverne replaced Miss Annie Sinclair as Clairette. Here again the business was enormous, and more Royalty and more aristocracy continued to be among kind friends in front. Among the delighted spectators in the early days of this comic opera at the Opera Comique were our present gracious King and Queen and the ill-fated Prince Imperial, who selected this theatre for his first visit to the play after the death of his still more ill-fated father, Louis Napoleon.

On shifting from the Opera Comique, Mr. Morton took Miss Soldene and Co. to the Lyceum, where, after a short spell of "The Grand Duchess," "Madame Angot" was again revived. Once more it went strong and well, barring for a few nights, when Miss Soldene and Miss Dolaro had a little misunderstanding, as even operatic actresses will do, on the all-important question of Precedence.

The squabble arose out of discussion as to which diva should sing the tag of the finale. As a matter of fact, this tag falls to Clairette in the original score, and during the whole of Morton's playing of the opera Clairette had had that tag. Miss Soldene has confessed in her interesting book of Recollections that, as she shared in the management of this season at the Lyceum, she seized upon this tag

for herself, exercising what she then felt to be the leading lady's right.

Miss Dolaro, though rather a petite daughter of Israel, had a temper considerably larger than her size, and Miss Soldene had a spirit which quite matched her more massive proportions. Thus the rehearsal-barometer soon pointed to—and for a time, kept at—"Stormy!" However, better counsels and ditto behaviour anon prevailed, and the short Lyceum season again rolled along merrily until nearly such time as Mr. Morton had arranged to emigrate. Whereunto he emigrated and what came of his emigration will be recounted in "our next."



CHAPTER XXIX.

MORTON AS EMIGRANT.

In the autumn of 1874 Charles Morton (then 55 years of age) might have been observed taking ship for New York. With him he had a fine comic opera company, which he called "The Soldene Opera Bouffe Company." It would serve no purpose, except that of padding, to describe in any further detail the incidents of that fateful voyage. Enough that in due course, Morton and Co. opened, according to their contract, with Maurice Grau and Carlo Chizzola at the Lyceum Theatre, Fourteenth Street, New York, in the middle of the following November. Their first piece was "Genevieve de Brabant." Several of the characters were played by the members of the original English cast, as, for example, Edward Marshall, H. Lewins, J. B. Rae, and so on. This was followed by those other Philharmonic successes, "Chilperic," "La Fille de Madame Angot," and "La Grande Duchess."

The attractions against them in New York included the late Dion Boucicault, as Conn in the "Shaughran" (which he had only just then produced); with the handsome and at that time much-worshipped histrionic idol, H. J. Montague, as the English officer. The equally handsome, but more Hercules-like formed, George Rignold, was at another house, in his famous impersonation of Henry V.

In that City of Brotherly Love (Philadelphia) this company, and its fine-limbed choristers, who had made quite a sensation among the bald-heads of the period, opened at Mrs. Drew's Theatre. Not long after the company appeared at Brooklyn, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, Louisville, St. Louis, Galveston, and New Orleans. In the last-named city they gave ten performances per

week, which included three matinées and a Sunday evening show!

On reaching the City of Brooklyn they had to encounter frightful blizzards, accompanied by bergs of ice. At Boston the Harvard Students contrived to bribe the professional supers and to take their places on the stage in order to be near the English chorus girls. At Baltimore, the train bearing the company behaved as though it had belonged to one of our own Southern Counties lines, for it resolutely refused to go on. Whereupon sixty mules were chartered to persuade that train to reach the desired theatrical haven.

At Galveston, the weather grew warmer, and the Press still more so, administering to the poor Opera-Bouffe wanderers "tapioca" in large doses. At New Orleans, most of the playgoers who supported the show possessed complexions which resembled (as the Dusky Prince says in "The Merchant of Venice") "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun." Moreover, as oranges formed the staple produce of that celebrated Southern City, the native playgoers would fain have paid for their seats with several boxes of the same. Many of the natives had little else to offer in exchange for entertainment value except perhaps a few stray alligators, but with regard to these Morton and Co. were "not taking any."

We have it on the best authority, that the best laid schemes of mice and men aft gang agley, whether the mice in question be those squeaking choristers who can barely say a word so as to be understood, or whether the men be the managers whose fate it is to try to control them. Therefore, as this history is a strictly veracious one, it has to be confessed that the Morton-Soldene Opera-Bouffe Co. scored a loss of some eight thousand pounds on their American tour.

As a set-off against this, it has also to be pointed out that it was Mr. Morton, a pioneer of so many entertainment novelties, who introduced the first light opera company into the United States. It was he who paved the way for

frequent subsequent visits of similar important combinations, who in due course reaped benefit from his sowing, for until his visit with this opera troupe almost the only English entire company to visit America was the still-surviving Miss Lydia Thompson, who, with her company of Blonde-burlesquers, as they were called, had toured certain American cities a few years before.

This voyaging manager was from boyhood always inclined to think more than he spoke, and was in no sense and on no subject given to emulate those Verges-like persons "who will be talking." So it fell out that on the voyage back to England, Home and the native Beauty, the managerial voyager would sit a-nights in the smoking saloon and listen to the incessant flow of more or less immaculate anecdotes that poured forth from his fellow-travellers. Story after story was told, joke after joke was cracked, reminiscence after reminiscence was more or less glibly—and more or less veraciously—recounted.

Night after night passed, and still Charles Morton continued to prove himself the best of listeners, but he added no anecdote to enliven the general joy of the whole refreshment table. On the last night of the voyage, just as the good ship was nearing the white cliffs of Albion, several of his fellow-voyagers denounced him for having maintained so imperturbable a silence.

Morton used to say that he might reply as the man in the fable did on a similar occasion :

"Gentlemen : I will ask you a conundrum ; It is this : What is the difference between a turkey and Me?"

After a short spell of silence, the riddle was unanimously "given up," whereupon the riddler responded, "Why, a turkey is not stuffed with chestnuts *until it is dead!*"

* CHAPTER XXX.

THE LATE MR. MORTON'S TALE OF A "TRUST."

When one is writing of events that happened thirty years ago, it is difficult to remember details, but I recollect being told that in America the leading question put about a stranger is, in New York, "What is he worth?"; in Boston, "How much does he know?"; in Philadelphia, "What of his family?" In Chicago, in 1874, they asked none of these things; they simply remarked, "Hasn't Morton brought over a company of angels?" and to this day the old-time playgoers of America admit that there never was such a matchless crowd of stage ladies seen under one management.

But I didn't bring them all back. Not long before my return I had a hint from one or two that certain of the company were often to be seen in some of the swaggerest restaurants in the various cities, and although a manager cannot, of course, be held responsible for all that happens on tour, I hold it to be his duty to warn where he thinks a warning would be appreciated. There was in my troupe one young lady more than usually prepossessing, and when we were in New York I twice saw her on the side-walk accompanied by a gentleman somewhat older than herself. The second time they were in a very fashionable barouche, the turn-out being so extra grand that people stopped to admire the vehicle, and especially the lady who occupied it.

Now this girl had been brought to me at the Opera Comique by her mother in 1873, and I had engaged her for the chorus of "Madame Angot." The mother was a decent body, who had herself been on the stage in some humble

* Not long before his lamented death, Mr. Charles Morton himself wrote this and the following chapter for this biography. As they are not only very interesting, but are also written just as that long-esteemed veteran used to talk, we have thought it advisable to retain them.—W. H. M. AND H. C. N.

capacity, and she begged of me to look after her daughter. "For," added the anxious parent, "she is very pretty, Mr. Morton, and I know the temptations." This was, in a mild sort of way, a trust, and when I saw this gay equipage dashing along Broadway, I sent for the girl.

"Maggie," I began, "you remember what your mother said when she brought you to me at the Opera Comique. I was sorry to see you this morning in that chariot."

"It's all right, Sir," said she, with a quiet self-contained smile, "he's going to marry me."

"I hope he is," was my parting word, "but if ill befalls you, remember that I have kept my word to your mother."

After this I think Miss Soldene said something to her of a similar kind, but it didn't hinder her from disappearing suddenly the very week the return boat left New York for home.

We were every one sorry at losing her, but, like all things, time tempered our regret, and the incident was soon forgotten.

A year or two ago, when George Fuller Golden, the droll comedian, made his *début* at the Palace, a gentleman booked the best box in the house, and another American "turn" with whom I was having a chat over my regular cup of tea which I nightly take at the back of the stalls, said, "You've a very distinguished man in the box to-night."

"Yes," said I, "Signor Marconi."

"No, no," he replied, "Signor Marconi is on the other side of the house. I mean the largest O.P. box."

"Oh, who is he?" I inquired.

"That's one of the big New York Trust men; he's worth twenty million dollars. His name is Simeon B. Sparks."

Just then one of the attendants brought me a note from the box in question. It ran:—

"Mr. Simeon B. Sparks would esteem the favour of a minute's conversation with Mr. Morton."

I at once went round, to find a distinguished looking

American, about fifty or so, and an exceedingly handsome lady a few years younger, but who, I thought, must in earlier days have been very beautiful. They rose at my entrance.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Morton?" she said, with a sly laugh. "We shall be so glad to see you at the 'Cecil.'"

It was Maggie!



CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. MORTON'S STORY OF HIS RETURN VOYAGE.

I grew to like the States and its citizens so much that when I came to take my leave I felt quite sad, although, naturally, I was pleased to know that my eyes were soon to be greeted by the white cliffs of my native land. Yet it was only by the merest chance that I arrived in England safely, for the captain, a very old navigator, and an able man, found himself early one morning in the centre of thirty or forty icebergs which had drifted from the polar regions further south than is usual. What a wonderful sight it was! I have often wished that the cinematograph process had been discovered in those days, so that that memorable morning might have been reproduced. But after all the prismatic hues could not be shown on the film, and it is those rainbow shades that make the iceberg a thing of beauty.

But, like many things of beauty, icebergs are dangerous objects to meet, especially when there seems no possible way to avoid them. Our captain dodged and dodged, using all his best sea knowledge, but towards mid-day he had had to change the ship's course a dozen times, and yet the icebergs were all around us. Presently he "manœuvred for an opening," as they say in "Fistiana," and got into this position. For miles on both sides we seemed to view a long avenue of icebergs, and we were steaming in apparent safety between them. The captain, however, was scanning the horizon with patient eyes.

Presently he called to the chief officer, and together they in turn looked through the ship's big telescope.

Then I saw the cause of their trouble. Right across the line of sight some miles off was a small iceberg that completely blocked our path, and just there all the other bergs seemed as though forming up at close quarters.

Hastily the captain held a consultation, and the order was given to steer south the moment we should pass the next ice giant on our right.

At this time we were speeding west, and to turn almost at direct right angles required the helm to be put hard down.

The helmsman at the wheel had scarcely started the necessary operation, when right from behind the iceberg we were rounding came a steamship, as big as our own, across our bows. Shouts went up from our deck. Men turned pale, and, speaking personally, I felt that the end had come.

"Nothing can save us," said an excited American who was standing by my side, and I saw him rush down to the lower deck where the lifebelts were stowed.

How we escaped I don't know to this day. We kept on our course, since there was no time to get the rudder round, and the other ship, fortunately, altered hers, the result being that the two vessels passed each other with less than fifty feet between them. Indeed, had they been paddle steamers instead of screws, the paddles would have clashed.

Those who have seen the Mechanical Hippodrome at Earl's Court, where the horses look as if they must come together, and at the critical juncture fly off at a graceful tangent, will fully understand what transpired in the mid-Atlantic on this occasion.

I know there were a good many grateful hearts on board that night, and I will frankly admit that I, for one, was very fervent in my thanks to an all-wise Providence. During my long and chequered career I have probably taken a good many risks, but none were so near putting an

end to my life story as the iceberg avenue through which we steamed in 1875. I ought to mention, as illustrating the enterprise, dash, and readiness of the American, that the gentleman who went to find a lifebelt was found, when the danger had all gone by, sitting down on *six*, which he must have detached and collected in less than one minute and a half at the outside!

But the Americans always were so smart.



CHAPTER XXXII.

AT THE OPERA COMIQUE AGAIN.

On Charles Morton's return to England, of course, he could not remain idle for long. Indeed, his busy brain began working new managerial projects for London consumption while he was yet on the briny, negotiating his return voyage. No other London Theatre presenting itself, however, on his arrival in his native city, he was fain to fall back on the Opera Comique again. But that matter once settled, still another difficulty presented itself. Inasmuch as all but one of the lady members of his troupe had either remained in America with Miss Soldene, or had been given in marriage to this or that more or less distinguished American citizen who kept his carriage, the manager had to cast about him to organise a new company. This he soon contrived to achieve, selecting among others Cornélie D'Anka, Augusta Thomson, and Pauline Rita, plus his old histrionic helpers, Mons. Marius, E. D. Beverley, J. B. Rae, and Mrs. Brian. With these, and with an extensive contingent of beautiful young damsels for the "thinking" parts, this impresario started a fresh season at the Opera Comique with a revival of one of his old successes, namely, "La Fille de Madame Angot."

Lecocq's comic opera was anon followed by Offenbach's opera bouffe, "La Grande Duchesse." In this the principal parts were played by Augusta Thomson in her original character Wanda; Marius, as Prince Paul (a very quaint performance, and on totally different lines to those adopted by the first English representative, "Jimmy" Stoye); J. B. Rae, as Baron Puck; E. Marshall, as Baron Grog; H. Lewins, as General Boom; and Cornélie D'Anka as the Duchess. The great feature of "La Fille de

Madame Angot" was the "Conspirators' Chorus." That this did not achieve its immense popularity solely on its literary merits may be judged from the subjoined refrain :

"O ! come my friends ! O ! come with me !
And the world shall see-ee—What the world shall see !
If the world don't clearly understand our plot—
Why, then the world had better not !"

Handsome Mdlle. D'Anka played the Grand Duchess and the aforesaid Madame Lange at several different places after this engagement. Perhaps her last appearance in the latter character was that which she made at poor "Gus" Harris's revival at Drury Lane in 1880. This lady, who had a singularly beautiful face and head of the blonde "Gretchen" type, and was indeed what Joe Gargery would call a "fine figure of a woman," made her first appearance in England at the Globe some years before this Opera Comique season. Though not by any means a great singer, her charming appearance and her evident desire to please always made her a great favourite.



PAULINE RITA.

Old playgoers and divers into theatrical lore will remember that it was during Mdlle. D'Anka's engagement at the Globe extreme commotion was caused (at all events in the daily papers) by a police case against an alleged crazy admirer. This enthusiast was charged with having popped his head—and a pistol—through the window of Mdlle. D'Anka's brougham "with intent to do her bodily harm." Also it will be remembered that the accused was *not* subsequently found to be insane, as was the case with

Mrs. Vincent Crummles's only pupil. Indeed, it was shown that the supposed dangerous wooer's only weapon of offence was an old pipe which he had presented in pistol fashion "for a joke." Much comic copy was eventually made of this "alarming attack," and the beautiful D'Anka was somewhat unmercifully chaffed.

It was during this second season of Charles Morton's at the Opera Comique that, at the invitation of Mr. (now Sir) Charles Wyndham, he took his company to the Crystal Palace to give a series of matinées of "La Fille de Madame Angot." With him were his chief lady stars, including

the aforesaid Mdle. D'Anka.

The last-named actress became on one occasion somewhat irate because she found that she would have to "dress" with two other ladies. She was, therefore, discovered standing outside the dressing-room, demanding separate accommodation for herself.

Presently, on the manager approaching, she gravely saluted him with a profound curtsy, and exclaimed, in



MDLE CORNELIE D'ANKA.

her quaint broken English, striving the while to subdue her rising wrath, "Meester Morton, I cannot—I vill not—dress in dis room. I vill insist to dress myself in a room to myself."

"All right," quoth he, "do as you like, so that you dress at once." Then he added, with a merry little twinkle in his eye, "and I will come and assist you."

To this Mademoiselle archly replied, shaking her finger at Morton, "Ah! vicked von, you ought to 'ave a shame of yourself," and with that the shocked Cornélie at once darted back into the dressing-room and forthwith made herself at home with her two equally charming colleagues.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SPELL AT THE ROYALTY.

After Charles Morton's second season at the Opera Comique he bobbed up serenely at the Royalty, opening in the middle of 1876 with "La Perichole," and a reproduction of the just previously produced "Trial by Jury." This cantata, with the exception of a somewhat hybrid musical mixture called "Thespis, or The Gods Grown Old," was the first of the wonderful series of comical operatic works by W. S. Gilbert, and the late Sir (then Mr.) Arthur Sullivan. John L. Toole (so long, alas, incapacitated) was very droll in this piece, produced by the late John Hollingshead at the Gaiety.

In "La Perichole" the name part was enacted by the then still winsome, but also still wayward, Selina Dolaro, who was supported by a strong company, the leading tenor of which was the late Walter Fisher, husband of that delightful comedienne, Miss Lottie Venne, who is as alert and quaint as ever she was. The cast of "Trial by Jury" was the same as in the original production thereof a little while before, and included Arthur Sullivan's humorous brother, Fred, as the Learned Judge; the said Walter Fisher as the Defendant; the still beautiful Nellie Bromley (mother of the beautiful Miss Lilian Eldee, who died recently at an early age), as the Fair Plaintiff; and last, but not least (except perhaps in stature), W. S. Penley, in a "thinking part," namely, one of the Jury, forsooth!

"La Perichole" was never one of the greatest Offenbach successes in England—either when first produced with its big Gaiety company a few years before, or when it was revived at the Garrick about twenty years later with Florence St. John in the name part. During this opera's comparatively short run at the Royalty other pieces were

put on with it. These included Mr. Charles Collette's still highly successful merry mixture entitled "Cryptoconchoid-syphonostomata," as concocted by himself and the late Richard Edgar, who was son of that sonorous tragedienne, Miss Marriott. Collette at once achieved a pronounced success in this piece with the unspellable name.

"Crypto," etc., did not claim to have the literary and finished humour of that previous play so full of sesquipedalianism — namely, "Chrononhotonthologos." This was written in the early part of the eighteenth century by Henry Carey, who had the additional fame of being a lineal ancestor of Edmund Kean and the literary parent of Sally who Lived in an Alley. It may perhaps interest those ignorant of Carey's wonderfully clever burlesque tragedy, if we quote a few lines therefrom. Here are the opening passages :—

Rigdum Funnidos : "Ho ! Aldeborontiphoscophornio !
Where left you Chrononhothologos"?

Aldi : "Lo the King, his footsteps this way bending,
His cogitative faculties immersed
In cogibundity of cogitation !
Let silence close our folding doors of speech,
Till apt attention tell our heart the purport,
Of this profound profundity of thought !"

Anon King Whatsisname thus gives orders to his musical retinue :—

" Let the singing singers
With vocal voices most vociferous
In sweet vociferation out vociferise
E'en sound itself !"

Ere long, however, the polysyllabic monarch meets with the death which he so richly deserves, at the hands of Bombardinian, with whom he is dining. The tragedy's finale starts with King Chron. slaying the Cook, exclaiming as he does so :—

" Be thou thus hashed in hell, audacious slave !
Hashed pork ! Shall Chrononhothologos
Be fed with swine's flesh and at second hand !"

He then strikes Bombardinian, who replies :—

“A blow ! Shall Bombardinian take a blow !
Blush ! Blush, thou Sun ! Start back, thou rapid ocean,
Hills, vales, seas, mountains, all commixing, crumble,
And unto chaos pulverise the world
For Bombardinian has received a blow !
And Chrononhothologos shall die !”

He then stabs the King in several places, anon exclaiming in raving madness :—

“Ah ! what have I done ?
Go ! call a coach ! and let a coach be called !
Let him that calleth it be called the caller !
And in his calling let him nothing call
But Coach ! Coach ! Coach ! Oh ! for a coach, ye Gods !”

He then kills himself and the curtain falls amid general rejoicing.

Another short play soon added to the Royalty programme was a farce, called “A Good Night’s Rest,” which principally deserves mention from the fact that it was the work of Mrs. Charles Gore, a sometime popular novelist whose name will go down in London theatrical history because of her having written a comedy called “Quid pro Quo,” which won a prize competition given by old Ben Webster at the Adelphi, nearly thirty years before. This competition aroused almost as much interest as those Hidden Treasure searches which awhile ago turned so many English citizens into temporary maniacs. Mrs. Gore’s prize play, when read by the light of the Modern Drama, makes one shudder to think what the unsuccessful comedies in this competition must have been !

Morton a little later replaced “La Perichole” by revivals of “La Fille de Madame Angot” and “La Grande Duchesse,” “Trial by Jury” continuing to supplement the programme by way of after-piece. The version of the first-named opera was that which had been used by Selina Dolaro when she succeeded Emily Soldene at the Philharmonic at the time Charles Morton vacated it, and Charles

Head took it over. This version was specially re-written by Frank Desprez, so long one of the chief members of the *Era* staff.

Barring the fact that both the leading lady and the leading man of this opera company (always more or less peevish and trying, became often still more trying and peevish, thus arousing more dissension than dramatic enthusiasm, this brief but very interesting Royalty season ended without "further adventure," as the romantic storytellers say.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

AT THE OPERA COMIQUE—LAST TIME.

In due course Mr. Morton ran a third season at the Opera Comique, and engaged for this purpose Miss Soldene and her sister, Clara Vesey, who had, with one or two other opera-bouffers, just returned from America. This season was started with a programme, which included a comedietta by the late George Lash Gordon, entitled "A Hornet's Nest" (a name subsequently used for one of Henry J. Byron's latest comedies); and Offenbach's opera-bouffe, "Madame L'Archiduc." The English libretto of this was by H. B. Farnie. "Madame L'Archiduc" had a cast full of artistes all either then or subsequently celebrated folk. For example, in addition to Miss Soldene, who played the name part, and her sister, Miss Vesey, as Ricardo, there appeared: W. J. Hill (afterwards so droll in Gilbert's "Wedding March," and as Uncle Cattermole in "The Private Secretary"), who played the Archduke; Felix Bury was the waiter Gilletti; Miss Kate Santley—who was mentioned in our Oxford chapters as having sung "The Bell goes a-ringing for Sarah" and such like ditties for Mr. Morton towards the end of the sixties—enacted the character of Captain Fortunato. W. S. Penley, who with "Charley's Aunt" earned one of the biggest fortunes ever made in theatrical management, impersonated the deep, dark conspirator, Bonardo. The part was small, but even in such parts, and while yet very young, did Penley contrive to gain roars of laughter. If he were allotted but little dialogue, and even though that dialogue might (as in this instance) not be overwhelmingly brilliant and epigrammatic, yet the now well-known Penleyian physiognomy and demeanour caused roars of laughter.

The aristocratic playgoers—or "Patrons of the Drama"

—who, as will be seen, had been “assisting” at most of Mr. Morton’s ventures since “Genevieve de Brabant” at the Philharmonic, attended this third Opera Comique season in even greater force than hitherto. The then Dukes of Newcastle and Sutherland, and all sorts of Marquises and Earls, Baronets, and so forth, came along night after night.

These visits often caused more or less of a flutter among “All Concerned,” and the general excitement was not a little increased by the fact that two of the chief ladies concerned, namely, Miss Soldene and Miss Santley, were from time to time scarcely as harmonious in their relations as could have been wished. So much so, that Manager Morton was in constant expectation of one or other “walking out of the theatre,” as the well-known professional locution hath it. In due course, however, this diplomatic impresario contrived to soothe the two favourites, and they swore eternal friendship—for a time. At the moment of writing, nearly thirty years later than this, the still popular ladies are, as the gentle-hearted Joe Gargery used to say to Pip, “ever the best of friends, dear boy.”

It was during this third season at the Opera Comique that six small youths presented themselves one evening at the Box Office, and asked to be passed in on the ground that they were “professionals.” The manager, who happened to be standing by, smilingly inquired for some proof of this wholesale artistic claim. The youths exclaimed unanimously “we are the boys who sing ‘Spring, Spring, Beautiful Spring’ at Covent Garden.” “How do I know that,” quoth the Manager, whereupon the seat-demanding sextette at once began to break forth into that long-popular waltz song.

This little episode is of apiece with that other theatrical story concerning a man who, alleging that he was a second low comedian, presented himself at a suburban theatre which was then being run by an ex-first low comedian. As the man applied for a seat, the ex-comedian remarked “Oh!

you say you are a second low-comedian! If so, answer me one question. Is she to be buried in Christian Burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?" To this query the applicant at once replied from the same Bard, "I tell thee she is! therefore make her grave straight."

"Rumbo!" quoth the ex-first Grave-digger to the then practising second ditto, adding "pass one to upper circle."

This acquiescence was, of course, a more pleasant method to adopt than that chosen by a certain tragic-minded manager, who on a certain similar occasion looked the seat craver up and down from heel to head, and vice versa, and then exclaimed thunderously, in a certain line out of "Othello."

"Let him not pass, but kill him rather!"



CHAPTER XXXV.

MORE ABOUT "ORDERS," PLEASE.

Speaking of "Orders," during Morton's tenancy of one or other of this group of playhouses, he, wishing to see a certain city friend of his, enclosed in his letter a couple of stalls. To his surprise he received the following reply:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

I presume I am indebted to your good nature for the enclosed, which pardon my returning, as I never go to any place of amusement without paying for the same. I have no doubt that a large number of your friends will be only too pleased to get them, and I should deprive them of the pleasure if I omitted to return them. With thanks, etc., etc."

This simple epistle is inserted here as merely a matter of history, because all who have heard of the circumstance vow that this is the only instance on record of anyone *having refused free seats*.

Indeed, all Human Nature—that is to say, Play-going Human Nature—will go to any length, and, indeed, almost commit any crime, in order to get "passed in." Many, indeed, appear always slightly to alter Mr. Pope's famous line, and say "Orders is Heaven's first Law!"

Apropos of "orders for the play," many a story could be told of the terrible things which seekers for free passes have undergone, or have caused others to undergo, in order to secure such things. Many of us have known such strange folk who have willingly stood treat to expensive suppers and what not, after the play all on account of their having been able to go to the Theatre without having to pay for their seats. In other cases these misguided persons, whose passion for orders exceeded even that of the worthy Mrs.

Todgers's commercial young gentleman for gravy, have been known to adopt all kinds of subterfuges in order to compass their nefarious (that is to say—non-seat buying) ends.

Happily the "order" system is not so rampant in our theatres and music halls as it was of yore. Nowadays, when it is necessary, as, of course, it sometimes is, to "paper" a house, the plan is carried out with far better diplomacy than was wont to be the case in the old days, when the presence in the stalls and circle of startling red opera cloaks and ill-fitting hired "swallow-tails," etc., betrayed the presence of "paper." The worst of the earlier system was, that the old-time acting-manager, who often spent most of his time in graciously accepting drinks at the bar, was wont so to distribute the "orders" necessary and otherwise in such a fashion that he often drew to the theatre, or hall, concerned, a set of visitors who would in the modern phrase be described as "undesirables." For these free admissions which such acting-manager scattered broad-cast in season and out of season, that worthy official was rewarded not only with the aforesaid frequent drinks, but he was also able to count upon these voracious order-consumers to purchase sheafs of tickets when the time came round for his "Annual Complimentary Benefit."

In addition to this form of order-distribution there was started some few years ago in connection with sundry suburban theatres (especially at the some-time defunct Astley's) a system of free-pass distribution which became an unmitigated nuisance. Many sufferers will remember that this system included the pushing of whole bundles of theatre passes into the letter boxes and under the doorways of all sorts and conditions of dwelling-houses. Another wretched part of this business was that when some unsuspecting persons were lured on to presenting these "orders" at the theatre concerned, it was always found that the parts of the theatre for which the passes had been issued, were full, and that the vouchers could only be used

on the payment of some fee or other, as "cross-money," to some higher-priced part of the house. Moreover, it was, of course, at such play-houses and music halls as these that the "harpy" system reigned supreme, and that the highest possible prices were charged for the worst possible drinks, and so forth.

There have been times, however, when even orders for the play have, like adversity, had their "sweet uses." As for example, when this or that poverty-stricken, strolling player or touring star has been fain to pay his landlady for the week, with some such free passes in lieu of coin of the realm.

On one occasion a very poor player engaged in a company, which had been turned into a "commonwealth"—that is to say, a combination wherein all the players share and share alike, even when the share amounts but to a few pence each—was badly served in a case of this "order" giving sort. Although the player was poor, he was not innately dishonest, and although he had received little or nothing by way of salary, and really did not know which way to turn in order to "get out of the town," yet he was sure that his kind mother or someone would be sending him a trifle very soon. He would thus defray the cost of his week's board and lodging in the town where he and his co-mates and brothers in exile had been acting to such bad business.

He had fondly hoped (good easy pro!) that if he gave his landlady a special pass for the Saturday night, he could get away from the theatre just before the performance finished, and, calling at his lodgings for the few goods and chattels he had left there, he could take a cheap night train for part of the journey upon which the company was next bound, and thus evade his landlady's eagle eye pro tem. But, "alas! and how easily things go wrong," as the poet sings. It so fell out that the manager of the "commonwealth" suddenly had an inspiration to put up that old stop-gap, "East Lynne," for the Saturday night.

Also that, expecting that a large house would result, as is usually the case, when this tear-compeller is billed, he had sternly issued that terrible notice described by a well-known humorist as the most perfect hexameter in existence, namely, "The Free List Entirely Suspended; the Public Press only Excepted."

Therefore the landlady, on being thrown out, so to speak, returned with her "order" (and her temper) to her house, and there lay in wait for the unfortunate actor who had thus made her, as she put it, "look like a fool." When, at last, she pounced upon the poor devil—But why pursue this sad story?



CHAPTER XXXVI.

MIGRATION TO THE ALHAMBRA.

It was towards the end of 1877 that Mr. Morton made his next important managerial movement. This was to take charge of the vast Alhambra in Leicester Square, which still popular entertainment resort is now and not altogether untruthfully described as "the premier variety theatre of London." When he took over the general management of the Alhambra it was not in a very flourishing condition. But speedily he made things hum, as our American cousins say. He achieved this hummingness by the methods which he had hitherto adopted; that is by securing the best of players to play in the best available pieces of the kind required.

The ubiquitous manager started his sway at the Alhambra with a revival of one of his former great successes, namely, "La Fille de Madame Angot." The leading characters in this were enacted by several Mortonian favourites, including the hereinbeforementioned Mdle. Cornelié D'Anka, Selina Dolaro, Henry Nordblom, and Felix Bury. The chief comic element was provided by Mr. Harry Paulton and by Miss Emma Chambers, then one of the brightest singing and dancing soubrettes to be found around London, and still at the moment of writing a popular comedy actress touring over South Africa.

In order to make this popular opera more in accord with Alhambra traditions, sundry ballets were added, including a grand Ballet of Jewels and a "Sabot Divertissement et Danse Rustique." The music of these terpsichorean interludes was provided by M. Georges Jacobi, who, even up to the time of his retiring from the musical directorship of the

Alhambra a few years ago, had composed and introduced over a hundred ballets!

In due course "La Fille de Madame Angot" was replaced by a new spectacular extravaganza, written by H. B. Farnie and Robert Reece, and entitled "Wildfire." This also was supplied with Jacobian ballet music. The new-coming players included two of Mr. Morton's previous singing histrions, namely, Misses Lennox Grey and Patty Laverne. Harry Paulton was again the chief comedian. The principal dancer in "Wildfire," as in so many other Alhambra productions, was the magnificently formed Mdle. Pertoldi, who was assisted in the dumb show portions of the piece by the fascinating Mdle. Gillert.

In spite of the fact that adapter Farnie, who had always something of the method of Rude Boreas, was for the most part engaged in quarrelling with his co-adapter Reece; and, notwithstanding that both the carolling and the choreographic stars were often at loggerheads, yet the mild-mannered Morton contrived to run his first new Alhambra production to a successful issue.

Both poor old fiery Farnie and the gentle and ever-reconcilable Reece have long since been at peace among the great majority. Farnie had made a good deal of money (for those days) out of several of his pieces, which were mostly adapted from the French. His most successful efforts financially were his "Blue Beard" and "Robinson Crusoe" burlesques, written for Lydia Thompson; his "Genevieve de Brabant" libretto for the Philharmonic; his "Nemesis" (also from the French), at the Strand; and his book of "The Old Guard" (another adaptation), at the Avenue. He died comparatively poor, however. So did Reece, in spite of the fact that, although he never made much money out of his plays, he had for many years received a large income from sundry sugar plantations in the West Indies. Towards the end of his life, however—and he was only a little over fifty when he died in 1891—he lost everything by reason of unfortunate speculations.

Reece was born at Barbadoes, but was brought to England in his early youth and sent to Balliol College, Oxford, where he soon gained his M.A. degree. In due course he became a clerk in the Colonial Office, where he soon received a fine salary. It was while thus engaged that in his mid-twenties, he started writing burlesques and little comedies. Undoubtedly his cleverest stage work was shown in his burlesques. The best of these were "The Stranger, Stranger than Ever," at the old Queen's Theatre, in Long Acre, towards the end of 1868; "Brown and the Brahmins" (based upon the famous old farce, "The Illustrious Stranger"), played at the recently demolished Globe Theatre in Newcastle-street a little later; and "The Forty Thieves," produced in 1880 at the still more recently demolished old Gaiety.

Even in these three best of the loveable Reece's dozens of burlesques, the chief interest now lies in the fact that their respective casts have, so to speak, become historic. For example, the principal parts in the happily-named travesty, "The Stranger, Stranger than Ever," were thus allotted:—The Stranger (with a terrible coughing carol based on Arthur Lloyd's then popular "Immensikoff" song), Lionel Brough; Peter, the Servant, Kate Santley, and Mrs. Haller (with a quaint song-skit on "Barbara Allen"); Henrietta Hodson, who has for many years been wife of Henry Labouchere, the politician-proprietor of *Truth*. The principal players in "Brown and the Brahmins" were those great favourites of the period, John (or "Hoppy") Clarke and Maggie Brennan, two of the best burlesque and comedy players ever seen in London.

In the original cast of "Brown and the Brahmins" was one of Mr. Morton's old histrionic retainers, namely, Edward Marshall, who was concerned in the Canterbury "sketch" for which that manager was fined in 1855, and who two years after the production of Reece's burlesque was again with Mr. Morton at the Philharmonic. In "Brown and the Brahmins" Marshall played King Tomidodd. This

monarch made his entrance with the following lines—the first of which was, of course, suggested by a quotation from Sheridan Knowles's once popular but now generally pooh-poohed play, "The Hunchback":—

"Fathers, make straws your children ! Don't have daughters,
A pretty piece of news this fellow's brought urs !
Unless the Princess weds—which she refuses,
It's fortune this Isle loses and I-loses ;
In short a glimpse of ruin quite stupendous,
For Tomidodd, the King, surnamed Tremendous !"

Such were the burlesque rhymes and puns popular in those days. As H. J. Byron used to say, "Hon his walk he madly puns."

Reece's Gaiety "Forty Thieves" burlesque, though a far less clever piece of work than either of the above-mentioned twain, achieved a much longer run than any of his other pieces. This length of run was due to two reasons. One was that the principal characters were played by Edward Terry, "Teddy" Royce, poor Kate Vaughan, who lately died in South Africa ; the late Tom Squire (a brother of Sir Squire Bancroft) ; "Connie" Gilchrist, who is now the Countess of Orkney ; and that late greatly beloved Gaiety favourite, Nellie Farren.

Another reason for the big success was that at a certain moment of the performance the forty chorus ladies, who represented the banditti, flung forth their eighty scantily clothed nether limbs with one flash, as it were, and then marched round and round to the more or less inspiriting strains of "The Turkish Patrol." Such an extensive, not to say startling, leg-show had never before been seen on any stage, and it is not surprising that this physical display drew the London gilded youth every night to the theatre, and from that time forth caused that species of soft-headed stallites to become known as "Gaiety Mashers!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A BUSY TIME AT THE ALHAMBRA.

After quieting down the recently indicated dissensions between his playwrights and his players, Charles Morton next gave—early in 1878—a revival of “The Grand Duchess,” with a cast including Miss Rose Lee, Louis Kelleher, Mdle. Sismondi, and “Jemmy” Stoye, who played Prince Paul, as he had done in that opera-bouffe’s original English production at Covent Garden some twelve years earlier. M. Bertrand was on this occasion engaged as resident ballet-master, and signalised his accession by introducing two ballets, one Hungarian, the other Bohemian. Later, however, quite a different dancing drama was arranged by M. Bertrand. This new example, entitled “The Golden Wreath,” had been “invented” by James Albery, who, eight years before, had made such a splendid start in his playwriting career with that delightful comedy, “Two Roses.”

This play had a sweetly pretty motto and tag—which referred to the two heroines who gave the play its name. The lines ran thus :—

“ One, like the Rose when June and July kiss ;
One, like the young Rosebud sweet May discloses ;
Sweetly unlike, and yet alike in this—
They are—Two Roses ! ”

This play was also noted for having in the Pecksniffian rôle of Digby Grant given the then “ Mr.” Henry Irving his first best real acting chance in London up to then. Irving was then a ten-pound per week “ character-actor ” to the Vaudeville-management, which consisted of the late David James, the late H. J. Montague, and the still-surviving and still acting Thomas Thorne. This trio was then nicknamed respectively “ The Jew, the Gent, and the Gentile.”

From his Alhambra time, poor Albery—always an impulsive and obstinate man—began to show a falling off in ability, and to devote himself for the most part to the preparation of not too brilliant adaptations of somewhat too “blue” French farces. A few years later Albery—at first partner in a small rope merchant’s business in the Blackfriars-road—lost, through dissipation, all faculty for work. Eventually he died without having left any provision for his children, or for his widow, the then very young and still charming actress, Miss Mary Moore.

In ending this little digression concerning one of the brightest and brainiest writers of the end of the nineteenth century, it may be interesting to repeat the “epitaph” which poor young Albery wrote for himself, a little while before he drifted into “second childishness and mere oblivion.” The lines ran thus:—

“ I revelled underneath the moon,
I slept beneath the sun ;
I lived a life of ‘ going to do ’—
And died with nothing done ! ”

Another always interesting literary personality who was engaged by Mr. Morton to supply libretti for the Alhambra was Henry S. Leigh, who about this time adapted the book of Von Suppé’s comic opera, “Fatinitza,” for the presentation of which sundry popular favourites were engaged, including the late Aynsley Cook, the late Fred Mervin, and the still-alive and merry John J. Dallas. “Fatinitza” was indeed a notable production.

Leigh, of course, was the celebrated vers de société writer whose chief successes in that favourite metier of his were made in *Fun*, especially during the proprietorship of the brothers Dalziel and the editorship of the late Henry Sampson, who afterwards founded the *Referee*. Leigh, albeit somewhat limited in his imagination and ideas, had a pretty wit, and could “throw off” a “copy of verses” with the best of them. “Throw off” is, perhaps, scarcely the

phrase, for Leigh was most punctilious as to polishing his three or four stanza poems. He was known to carry his tiny manuscripts about him for months together, in order to touch up this or that line. And when it was published this lay, or lyric, would only produce a few shillings per verse at "scale price." It was ever Leigh's proud boast that he "never wrote a cockney rhyme." And it was always believed that he wished this remark to be used as his tombstone epitaph.

Leigh, who dearly loved to be regarded as a "devil of a fellow," and especially to be considered as having been much crossed in love, died a few years later at the early age of forty-six. Like a good many other so-called or self-styled "Bohemians" of the "sitting up a-night" sort, he should (and *could*) "have died hereafter."

Perhaps the best theatrical stanzas that poor Leigh ever wrote occur in a couple of short poems, doubtless since forgotten by all but a few book collectors or certain of his old comrades, such as the present writers. The first of these pieces was inspired by a performance of "David Garrick," in which the original Ada Ingot, at the Haymarket, at once sent a flutter (or several) through the susceptible heart of this Bohemian bard.

After some few introductory verses Leigh burst forth thus :—

" But at last a lady entered, and my interest grew centred
 In her figure, and her features, and the costume that she wore ;
 And the slightest sound she utter'd was like music ; so I mutter'd
 To my neighbour, ' Glance a minute at your play-bill, I implore
 Who's that rare and radiant maiden ? Tell, oh, tell me, I implore,'
 Quoth my neighbour, ' Nelly Moore ! ' "

" Then I asked in quite a tremble—it was useless to dissemble—
 ' Miss or Madame, do not trifle with my feelings any more ;
 Tell me who, then, was the maiden, that appear'd so sorrow laden
 In the room of David Garrick, with a bust above the door ?
 (With a bust of Julius Cæsar up above the study door),'
 Quoth my neighbour, ' Nelly Moore.' "

"I've her photograph from Lacy's ; that delicious little face is
Smiling on me as I'm sitting (in a draught from yonder door) ;
And often in the nightfalls, when a precious little light falls
From the wretched tallow candles on my gloomy second-floor
(For I have not got the gas light on my gloomy second-floor),
Comes an echo, 'Nelly Moore !' "

The beautiful little golden-haired Nelly Moore, who played such havoc with Leigh's often-smitten heart, had but a very short career on the stage. Soon after her Haymarket experiences she went to the old Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, where she played only two or three characters. One of them was Nancy in "Oliver Twist," when the late Sir Henry Irving was the Bill Sikes, Lionel Brough Bumble, the Beadle, the late John Ryder Fagin, dear old Johnny Toole, the Artful Dodger, and Henrietta Hodson, Oliver Twist. Poor little Nelly next played the name part in Henry J. Byron's melodrama, "The Lancashire Lass," and it was during the run of this piece that she died at the age of 24. At that moment theatrical London was ringing with her praises and music-hall London was chortling a song suggested by this drama—a song which with its sweetly pretty "chorus" tune was one of the most popular carols in the repertory of the then idolised George Leybourne.

Leigh's other theatrical tour-de-force in the verse line was written around another brilliant little lady with whom Leigh also fancied himself madly in love. This was no other than the late Nellie Farren, who was then (just before starting at the Gaiety) delighting Olympic audiences with all sorts of clever impersonations, but especially in those fine cheeky boy's parts, Sam Willoughby in Tom Taylor's drama, "The Ticket of Leave Man"; Ned Sharpus in the same author's farce, "Our Clerks" and Bailey, Jun., the Barber's Boy, in a very clever adaptation of "Martin Chuzzlewit."

When Leigh's tender passion reached what he would doubtless (if he had thought of it) called its "Farren-

height," his amorous muse—as regards some stanzas—took the form of addressing this Nellie in a poem with the refrain "Little What's-Her-Name."

"Little What's-Her-Name" was ever so much younger than her rhythmic adorer, and not long after this effusion was dedicated to her, she married Mr. Robert Soutar, who was so long the late John Hollingshead's stage manager at the Old Gaiety. Leigh died about twenty years ago—Miss Farren, alas! was only able to remain upon the stage for about nine years after that, and she was comparatively young when in the April of this year ended the long sufferings which had kept her so many years from the public who had never ceased to remember and to love her. Much of her alertness and strong sense of humour has been inherited by her handsome son, Mr. Farren Soutar, who is now going well on towards the top of the theatrical tree.

Even now amid the regretful remembrances awakened by the penning of this paragraph, we who pen it, cannot choose but smile over one funny little utterance of this funny little lady's. This was her well-known exclamation in "Little Jack Sheppard" when on being confronted with a list of the young desperado's crimes, she was wont to exclaim with her eyes starting out of her head for joy, "Yus! I *know* I'm full of crime, and Oh! *I wish I was wuss!*"



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MORE ALHAMBRAISM.

During 1878 Mr. Morton also presented at the Alhambra two other revivals of previous successes of his, namely, "La Perichole" and "Genevieve de Brabant." In both of these ventures his former variety and operatic protégée, Miss Emily Soldene, appeared, after touring in Australia. On the night of this re-appearance of La Soldene four thousand persons paid at the Alhambra doors. Another of this Alhambra manager's lady stars was Miss Constance Loseby, who had since the impresario's first engagement of her at the Oxford, become a great favourite in Mr. Hollingshead's Gaiety stock company.

A novel feature in the programme with "La Perichole" at the Alhambra was a "ballet-divertissement" called "La Sevilliana," composed by no less a personage than the late great Guiseppe Verdi. The principal "effects" represented the Four Seasons, all worked by some really marvellous "revolving scenes," a kind of thing then comparatively novel in Theatredom.

In order not to take up space by chronicling every detail concerning Mr. Morton's long and busy time during his first management of the Alhambra it is perhaps advisable to group together his remaining principal productions there. Thus it may be said that in the following year (1879) he put in excellent work with a revival of one of the old Gaiety's early successes, namely, "The Princess of Trebizonde," as composed by Offenbach. The English book was by that facile librettist, Charles Lamb Kenney, whose best remembered couplet is doubtless the one that runs somewhat as follows :—

" Nothing is striking in this seaside place,
Except the smacks upon the Ocean's face !"

In "The Princess of Trebizonde" Alhambra traditions were catered for by a ballet of wax figures—a very excellent idea when you come to remember that the Princess herself was but a "Poupée de Cire," the accidental breaking of whose nose formed the basis of the story. It may be added that it was a breakage occasioned in a far less innocent manner than was the damaging of another by a certain distinguished modern dramatist.

In the October of 1879, Mr. Morton presented to his Alhambra clientele a full-blown comic opera, the book by Robert Reece and Henry S. Leigh, and the music by Charles Lecocq. This was "La Petite Mademoiselle," a piece produced some time before at the Paris Renaissance. In the cast was that capable singer and comedian, the late Frank Hall, some time a comic of the "jolly" type, and subsequently secretary of the Music Hall Benevolent Fund; also Harry Paulton; Clavering Power (who came into comic opera after being for some years a villain at the "Vic."); Misses Constance Loseby, and Emma Chambers, and last, but not least, the late versatile genius, Fred Leslie.

Poor Leslie, who died at the age of thirty-seven in 1892, in the full tide of his successes at the Gaiety, had just before this Alhambra production been playing comparatively small parts at the Royalty with Miss Kate Santley. It was that ever kind-hearted lady who spoke to Mr. Morton on youthful Leslie's behalf. Said Miss Santley, "I have in my company a young fellow who is going to make a great name some day. He is worth a far better salary than I can give him. Do try to find something for him in your new production." And he did.

The next Mortonian productions at the Alhambra included a Farniesque spectacle called "Rothmago," the music of which, it may be noted, was provided by three composers, namely, the late Edward Solomon for Act I.; P. Bucalossi, for Act II.; and the late Gaston Serpette, for Act III.; with Jacobi throwing in three ballets. This was

followed by a "Sphinx and Pyramid" ballet, introducing Ænea, the "Flying Wonder." After "Rothmago" came a very important and very successful comic opera production. This was "La Fille du Tambour Major," the music by Offenbach, and the English book by the indefatigable Farnie. The cast will be fraught with interest to many enthusiastic playgoers, for it included such subsequent prime favourites in musical play, music hall, and melodrama as Mr. W. Carleton (since so popular an opera star in America); Miss Fannie Leslie (now one of our very finest variety artistes); the aforesaid Fred Leslie; and Miss Edith Blande, then one of the finest formed principal boys, and now a very intense representative of "Worst Women in London"; and similar terribly unscrupulous adventuresses in sanguifuminous melodrama, or "Whirlwind Drama of Surprises," as the Brothers Melville sometimes describe their dramatic works.

A little while after this production Charles Morton, although having proved himself a skilful manager, not only of this vast variety house, but of all its then often jarring directors and shareholders, felt impelled to seek fresh woods and pastures (or rather playhouses) new. When and how he sought them and what came of his seeking will be duly detailed "in our next."



CHAPTER XXXIX.

MORE MORTONIAN MOVING ABOUT.

After leaving the Alhambra, in 1881, Mr. Morton went in for a three months' season at the Connaught Theatre in Holborn, a theatre which, after many strange vicissitudes, became a building that was all sorts of things to all sorts of men. It finally drifted into a Carter-Paterson depôt, which it remains at the time of going to press. Even in its play-house period, its name was so often changed that playgoers became quite confused, and, being in doubt where to go to find the newly-named playhouse, eventually gave up looking for it altogether.

It was opened in 1868 as a circus, called the Holborn Amphitheatre. Next it became the Royal Amphitheatre, the Connaught, the Alcazar, the Grand Central Hall, etc., etc. Some seven years before Mr. Morton took it, under its Connaught cognomen, his old friend, and sometime co-manager, Mr. John Hollingshead, opened the ever-changing house as a cheap-price theatre, and among the pieces with which he wooed the suffrages of humble-priced playgoers was that heaviest of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, "The Maid's Tragedy," if you please! It was enacted for the most part by a contingent from the Gaiety, who doubtless, by reason of their old environment, made "The Maid's Tragedy" even more a burlesque than was the same ingenious and industrious collaborators' Elizabethan travesty, "The Knight of the Burning Pestle."

The Connaught was at very low ebb when Charles Morton ventured his fortunes there, and, after decorating and reconstructing the house, at a considerable expense, started with a revival of his previous Alhambra success, "La Fille du Tambour Major," with Aynsley Cook and Jennie "Jo" Lee in the principal parts. In due course the

daring manager essayed a new production of quite another kind, namely, "A Queen for a Day," a poetical drama, or tragedy, written by that brilliant playwright and novelist, Harriet Jay, and the still more brilliant poet, romancer and novelist, the late Robert Buchanan.

This play also seemed to have very strong non-drawing powers, and, indeed, not to mince matters, the public stayed away in its thousands! In the whole twelve weeks during which Mr. Morton held on, not one of the two hundred luxurious orchestra stalls which he had added to the house was ever booked or sold!

Things went rapidly from bad to worse, the weather contriving to do ditto. To crown all, or rather to uncrown it, on Boxing morning the whole roof fell in owing to the enormous amount of snow that had fallen. Thus ended the Mortonian management of the Connaught.

Still the manager, nothing daunted, went cheerily on, and presently he might have been observed at Her Majesty's Theatre, where he started as director for Haverley's "Mastodon Minstrels," as they were called. Here he helped, by his native judgment, and by strict attention to business, to run the vast burnt-cork show, with excellent financial results.



CHAPTER XL.

ANOTHER THEATRICAL VENTURE.

Following upon his chequered management of the Connaught and one or two other little business "flutters," the daring manager in due course "bobbed up serenely" in a new neighbourhood and at a new theatre. This theatre was the Avenue, which had been built by the late Sefton Parry. Parry had parted with the lease of this new playhouse (while it was being erected) to Mr. Edmund Burke, whether a descendant of the famous politician and essayist was not then, and has not since, been proved. This lessee had secured for his first tenants Miss Florence St. John and M. Marius. "Mons." at once sought out his former "governor" at the Philharmonic and offered him the management of the new theatre. That experienced impresario accepted the charge, and forthwith set to work to get the place opened. He started by issuing a very shrewd proclamation showing that although there were already many theatres in London, there was room for one more; especially one so splendidly equipped as this beautiful playhouse. The manifesto went on to give the following not altogether uninteresting statistics regarding the progressive growth of theatres in England and France.

"It is a curious fact" (said this synopsis) "that in 1791 the Constituent assembly, having recognised the right of every French citizen to erect a theatre and to give therein dramatic representation of any and every kind, the number of theatres suddenly increased from fifteen to forty. The population of Paris was at that period specified under 600,000. The population of London at the end of the last century was a little less than 900,000, and the British metropolis could certainly not boast at that time of the possession of more than

eight in 1795, but when Napoleon I. became Emperor he reduced the aggregate of theatres—properly so called—to forty, and subsequently to eight. After the restoration of the Bourbons the number of dramatic establishments steadily increased; and in 1846 there was in Paris twenty-two theatres. The population of Paris was then just over a million. The population of London numbered in 1851 nearly 1,400,000; and in Weale's "London Exhibited," published in 1852, there are enumerated only twenty theatres, namely, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Her Majesty's, the Haymarket, the Adelphi, the St. James's, the Princess's, Sadler's Wells, the City of London, the Strand, the Olympic, the Marylebone, Miss Kelly's (now the Royalty), the Lyceum, the Queen's (afterwards the Bancroft's Prince of Wales's), the Standard, the Pavilion, the Surrey, the Victoria (formerly the Coburg), and Astley's. The population of London in 1882 exceeded four millions, and to the twenty-two theatres enumerated by Weale (deducting the Victoria, which was by then disestablished as a theatre) had to be added the Britannia, at Hoxton, the Imperial, the Alhambra, the Vaudeville, the Connaught, Toole's (late Folly), the Philharmonic, the Elephant and Castle, the Court, the Criterion, the Gaiety, the Globe, the Opera Comique, the Savoy, the Comedy, and, lastly, the Avenue."

The grand total of London theatres was, therefore, thirty-five in 1882, against twenty-one in 1851. But when, however, one considers that the population of London had doubled in those thirty years, it could scarcely be said that London was over-theatred. Anyhow, the Mortonian manifesto did not seem to think so.

The foregoing list of playhouses will, of course, seem somewhat meagre to the present-day playgoer, who, in addition to such later West-end theatres as the newer Prince of Wales's, the Shaftesbury, Daly's, the Duke of York's (formerly the Trafalgar), the Apollo, the Lyric, Terry's, the Garrick, Wyndham's, the New, and the Waldorf, has at least a score and a half of suburban

theatres and some forty or fifty variety temples from which he may select where he may spend his evening—or his afternoon—as the case may be.

The late Sefton Parry—whose name loomed large on all Avenue announcements—had quite a mania for building theatres. As far back as 1866 he built the old Holborn Theatre, which, like the before-mentioned Amphitheatre in the same street, had a very varied and most unfortunate career. Also like that Amphitheatre, it often changed its name, becoming in turn the Mirror, the Duke's, and so forth. When Parry first opened the Holborn he happened to strike a success at once. This was Dion Boucicault's racing drama, "The Flying Scud," in which that artistic comedian and pathetic actor, the late George Belmore, as the old jockey, Nat Gosling, made his first really great hit. Playgoers of the period may remember that it was in this piece that the charming, but ill-fated, Amy Fawsitt made her first great success. Parry had no other triumph at the Holborn, and he soon parted with the property and went off to build theatres elsewhere. One of the theatres he next built was the Globe, which has lately been demolished by the London County Council improvements. Here, too, he met with few successes on his own account. He also built the Greenwich Theatre, and playhouses at Hull and Southampton, to say nothing of several "fit-ups" in South Africa, where he toured in the late "fifties" of the nineteenth century. Like many a theatrical speculator of to-day, he found that the "bricks and mortar" of these buildings paid him better than play-producing.

Before proceeding to recount Manager Morton's experiences at the Avenue, it may be interesting, or at least amusing, to recount a little anecdote concerning Parry.

It was while that wholesale theatre-builder was having a more than usually bad time at one of his playhouses where he had insisted upon running his show, that he chanced to attend one of the house dinners at the Green Room, where that arch punster, Henry J. Byron, happened to be dining.

Parry was always of a very lugubrious turn of mind, and his dress usually matched his demeanour.

A stranger who happened to be sitting next to Sefton Parry evidently regarded him as having something of a clerical cut, for presently he asked that melancholy-looking magnate whether he were in Holy Orders.

"Wholly Orders?" exclaimed Byron, with that well-known little twinkle in his eye. "No; the show he is now running is *that*."



CHAPTER XLI.

AVENUE ATTRACTIONS.

After due consultation with Mr. Morton, M. Marius and Miss St. John wisely decided not to risk opening the Avenue with a new play, but to rely upon some success with which they had been identified. He suggested Offenbach's "Madame Favart," in which they had both scored so heavily at the Strand some three years earlier.

They promptly "made it so," starting on March 11th, 1882.

To support these two stars a strong company was engaged, including the then oncoming Fred Leslie; Henry Bracy; Walter Everard (afterwards so long with Mr. Penley); the late Henry Ashley; and Mr. Hermann de Lange (who some time ago renamed himself Harvey Long). Among the ladies were the late Miss Wadman (who died just as she was making a name), and those two fine-figured "pages," Emily Duncan and Clara Graham, who, in most libretti of this Farnie kind were generally engaged to speak such all important lines as "Now, boys, who's for a drink?" to bring on, or to take off, the "chorus."

In the following June the Avenue's first novelty was produced. This was "Manteaux Noirs," the book adapted by Walter Parke and Harry Paulton from a work by the inexhaustible Scribe; and the music by P. Bucalossi. The story had been utilised in England some years earlier for an opera called "Giralda" composed by Adolphe Adam, and produced by the late Carl Rosa. In the Avenue adaptation Miss St. John and "Mons" Marius again scored respectively as Girola (a much harassed and hunted bride), and Don Philip of Arragon; and Fred Leslie made a very marked advance in his art, as the Grand Chamberlain Don

Jose de Manilla. That fine character actor, Charles Groves, was added to the company to play the part of Dromez the Miller; and among the new ladies engaged were Minnie Byron (daughter of the famous dramatist); Florence Trevelyan (afterwards Mrs. Robert Brough); and Miss Maud Branscombe, who was then, and for a few years later, the most photographed of stage beauties. Her counterfeit presentment was in every photographer's shop in London and the Provinces.

Henry Jeffries Ashley, a few years before the opening of the Avenue, surprised everybody who knew him by suddenly blossoming forth as a most unctuous comedian. He made his first real mark in this connection as Joskin Tubbs in Albery's highly successful, but also highly unsavoury, adaptation, "Pink Dominoes." For years and years before that he had plodded along and "muddled through" all manner of hero and heavy villain characters, in which for the most part his acting was of the most mechanical order. So much so that many wondered that Ashley, a nephew of the late Dr. Doran, and himself a man of excellent education, had not remained in the profession of civil engineering, to which he had devoted nine solid years' work. That was at the long celebrated firm of Maudslay, Son, and Field. Ashley was in the office of that firm about the same time that the afterwards "Lion Comique," George Leybourne, was a finely-formed young hammerman there.



CHAPTER XLII.

OTHER AVENUE ATTRACTIONS—MORE OR LESS.

The next new production with which Mr. Morton was concerned at the Avenue was "Lurette," adapted by Mr. Frank Desprez and Mr. Alfred Murray (some time known as "Farnie's Ghost"), who was last seen on London playbills as part author of "The Toreador" at the Gaiety. The English lyrics were by the hereinbeforementioned Henry S. Leigh, who was still found ready with his old boast, namely (1), that he had again been crossed in love ; (2) that he had not yet written a Cockney Rhyme!

The French book of this Avenue piece was entitled "La Belle Lurette," and the music thereto was the last that the giddy and gay Offenbach ever penned. Indeed, he died before he finished the score, and M. Hervé was chartered to write certain numbers for the last act, especially a "Chanson de Colonel," for Miss St. John, who enacted the heroine. This heroine was a laundress who had been caused to marry a duke ; and who anon, finding herself repudiated, set up in business, flaunting her title (and trade) beside the Ducal Mansion. The cast of "Lurette" included M. Marius as a comic valet ; Henry Bracy as the sometime neglected Duke ; T. P. Haynes as a laundryman, and Miss Lottie Venne, as the Mistress of the Laundry.

"Lurette" produced in April, 1883, at the Avenue, did not succeed in igniting the adjacent Thames. Anyhow, in the following June, it was succeeded by a revival of Offenbach's opera bouffe, "Barbe Bleue," which had been first seen in English form at the Standard, and in the West End at the Gaiety about fourteen years before. Miss St. John represented the heroine Boulotte, and, like her principal English predecessor, the late Julia Mathews, subdued the coarseness of the character, a feature which

had been so insisted upon by the original French exponent, the Saucy Schneider to wit. Mr. Bracy played the name part; Miss Venne Fleurette and Mons. Marius Popolani. Several new comers were in the cast. These included Mr. J. J. Dallas, as King Bobeche (in which Jimmy Stoye was so funny at the Gaiety), Mr. T. G. (now "T. Gideon") Warren, subsequently author of the merry play, "Nita's First," was the Count Oscar; the late Mr. John Ettinson (so long Mr. Morton's stage manager at the Palace Theatre) was the Alvarez; and Mr. Arthur Williams the Prince Sapphire. Among the minor players was Miss Lucy Carr-Shaw, sister of the multifarious Mr. George Bernard Shaw, humourist, dramatist, novelist, and many another "ist," including egotist. But then what an entertaining egotist!

Of the remaining history of the Avenue during Charles Morton's management thereof it is sufficient to add that it, and the lesseeship of Miss St. John and M. Marius, ended with a Christmas pantomime of "Whittington and His Cat," written and arranged by Mr. A. Henry, afterwards manager for the late William Holland, when for the nonce he transformed Covent Garden Opera House into a circus! This pantomime was performed entirely by children, and some of these children have since grown up into very popular players, such as "Little Addie" Blanche, and "Master" Harry Grattan, grandson of the versatile poet, playwright, and player, the late H. Plunkett Grattan.

Before quitting these Avenue reminiscences, it may be interesting to tell a little story of one of the company—namely, that arch-gagger, Arthur Williams, who subsequently migrated to the Gaiety to play in "Dorothy." The character allotted to him there, namely, the eighteenth century bailiff's officer, Lurcher, was, it must be confessed, not too over-whelmingly brilliant as it left the librettist's pen. Wherefore Arthur soon began to "embroider" the character. In one of his scenes, the hero whom Lurcher is dunning asks if he will take the debt in instalments. To

his reply Williams added a gaglet, saying "Instalments be hanged! Do you take me for a Sewing Machine!"

Presently the said librettist, the gentle Mr. B. C. Stephenson, seizing what seemed a good opportunity, and plucking up courage, meekly ventured to remonstrate with Williams. "It is not so much that I object to gagging," said he, "but I *do* wish you would keep in the period. Now, my dear Williams, you *know* that sewing machines had not been invented as early as 1750."

Williams promised amendment—especially as regarded synchronising with the "period." By a few nights later the eccentric Arthur had, more or less, unconsciously reverted to the gag complained of, and on one of these nights he had just got the words "sewing machine" out, when, to his horror, he caught sight of Stephenson in an end stall near the stage. But he was equal to the occasion, for suddenly remembering his vow to keep in the "period," he brought it out thus: "Do you take me for a sewing machine—*forsooth!*"



CHAPTER XLIII.

MORTON AGAIN AS MINSTREL MANAGER—AND AS
EMPIRE RULER.

Soon after finishing his engagement at the Avenue, Morton again joined the Haverley Minstrels. This time, however, he joined them at Old Drury, where these "Mastodon Minstrels" started a summer season at the end of May, 1884. In connection with this new "burnt cork" enterprise there was issued another Mortonian manifesto, in which much stress was laid upon the fact that this was the first occasion in which a minstrel troupe, large or small, had been allowed to enter the portals of the "National Theatre." The company numbered "One Hundred Performers," and at each end of this phrase upon the daybills, of course, there was added the usual adjuration "Count 'em!"

Perhaps the most noteworthy thing worth mentioning at this distance of time, in connection with this Haverley season was the fact that the American-made entertainment, entitled "Silence and Fun," was first introduced into England at this show by Willy West, who was reported to receive "One Hundred Pounds weekly." The command "count it," however, does not seem to have been added in this matter.

As when one gendarme laughs, all the gendarmes laugh, so one minstrel show is very much the same as any other minstrel show, or even more so. It is, therefore, enough to add that, excepting some few out-bursts on the part of that, the ever-eccentric impresario, Mr. Haverley, Mr. Morton's second management of these minstrels passed off without further adventure, and in due course the Minstrels themselves returned to their more or less native land, America.

After this brief Druriolanean interlude, the ubiquitous manager was soon found again in Leicester Square. This time, however, it was not at the Alhambra, but at a perfectly new theatre, namely, the Empire. This recently reconstructed amusement temple was built on the site of Saville House, a building which resembled the changeable gentleman mentioned by the so-called "glorious" John Dryden in that it had been everything by turns and nothing long.

The first essay at the Empire was a revival of Hervé's comic opera, "Chilperic," which has often been mentioned in our earlier pages. The name part, first played in England by the composer, and afterwards by Madame Soldene, was, at the Empire, allotted to Herbert Standing. The other principal parts were distributed among Mdle. Camille D'Arville and a bevy of beauties, including Agnes Consuelo, Clara Graham, Rosée Heath, Ivy Warner, and Madge Shirley.

The Empire had several more or less operatic and other plays in the course of about three years; but on the whole financial success did not result. Sooth to say, the place was something too large to make a comfortable theatrical house, and, after a fierce fight with the licensing authorities of the period, at Christmas, 1887, the Empire opened and started its variety theatre career with the late Sir Augustus Harris as stage manager, and Mr. George Edwardes as ruler of the front of the house.

In the meantime Charles Morton had moved across the Square, and had again pitched his managerial tent at the Alhambra, which, during his absence therefrom, had gone through many vicissitudes, including total destruction by fire at the end of 1882.

The Alhambra at the time of this disastrous fire was some twenty-eight years of age. Its first appearance as a place of amusement was as the Panopticon of Science and Art in 1854. In this form it lasted for about three years. After a year's closure it was re-opened by that ever enterprising

but ever eccentric impresario, E. T. Smith. He started in life as a policeman, after having been prevented by his mother from becoming a midshipman. After leaving the "Force" Smith became an auctioneer. Anon he started in the restaurateur profession, making his first restaurant out of what used to be Crockford's Gaming Club in St. James's Street. His first attempt in running places of amusement was at Vauxhall Gardens, but by 1850 he had become a full-blown theatrical manager at the old Marylebone, now the West London. Two years later E. T. Smith seized upon Drury Lane, then fallen into disrepute, not to say desuetude. Indeed, its ground landlord, the Duke of Bedford of the period, had just resolved to pull it down!

Smith's early management of the "Lane" is historic in more senses than one. In the first place he engaged the finest scene-painters and the finest stage-players of the time. Secondly, he always made a point of watching the provincial stages for rising talent. Thirdly, in connection with his first Drury Lane pantomime, namely, dear old E. L. Blanchard's "Harlequin Hudibras," he invented theatrical morning performances. To be punctiliously exact, it might rather be said that he revived the early afternoon shows which had been instituted by Shakespeare and Co., Ltd., in the days of the old Globe and other Elizabethan theatrical syndicates.

It was in 1858 that the said Smith cast his eye upon the closed Panopticon, and presently secured a lease thereof. Re-naming it the Alhambra, he started with a combined circus and panorama show. Gradually he introduced other entertainments, often displaying, as was his wont, considerable daring in his methods.

About two years after the Alhambra developed into a regular music hall, with all a music hall's privileges. Later it became the big ballet home which it has ever since remained, even in its occasional lapses into regular dramatic fare.

As in the case of the Philharmonic (described in our

earlier chapters), the Alhambra, during the Franco-Prussian War, became the scene of nightly outbreaks between the respective partisans of the two great nations engaged in that terrible conflict. These ebullitions were, of course, evoked by the singing or playing of each nation's respective war songs.

It was in the early part of this unhappy period that John Baum took over the Alhambra and turned it into a theatre proper. This meant, of course, the abandonment of the smoking and drinking privileges which that huge hall had previously enjoyed under E. T. Smith. Manager Baum and certain of his successors soon found that the "returns" at this then non-smoking playhouse sank almost to zero. Indeed, it was not until Charles Morton first undertook the management in the last century's middle seventies that the Alhambra's business began to increase apace. From the end of his first management, however, until it was burnt down in 1882, the Alhambra had but a fitful career financially, although many excellent theatrical and operatic programmes were put forth there. Indeed, in a financial sense, the Alhambra often (as old friend Paddy would say), "Enjoyed very poor health."



CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ALHAMBRA'S REVERSION TO TYPE—MORTON AGAIN
AS MANAGER.

The new Alhambra opened in the December of 1883 with a picturesque fairy spectacular opera, entitled "The Golden Ring," written by George R. Sims, and set to music by poor Fred Clay, who not long afterwards was seized by the terrible and lingering affliction from which he died. This piece, brightly written, melodiously composed, and magnificently mounted, ran into the following April. Its chief singing successes were made by Miss Constance Loseby, the late Miss Adelaide Newton, and the charming Miss Marion Hood, who, after a little later creating at the Gaiety the heroine characters respectively in Stephenson and Cellier's "Dorothy," in Richard Henry's "Monte Cristo, Jun.," and "Frankenstein" and A. C. Torr's and Horace Mills's, "Miss Esmeralda" retired from the stage.

"The Golden Ring" ran till the April of 1884, when it was succeeded by Millöcker's opera, "The Beggar Student," the English adaptation of which was by the late W. Beatty Kingston. This went on for a few months, and sundry other experiments succeeded—that is, in one sense, but not in another. Eventually the Alhambra's directors resolved to revert to the variety form of entertainment, and very wisely they re-engaged Charles Morton to attend to the management.

Morton soon produced a ballet called "The Swans," composed by M. Jacobi, and based upon an old German legend, which had served as the foundation of a pantomime at Covent Garden as far back as 1813. Also ballets respectively called "Melusine," "Nina the Enchantress" (both by Jacobi), and a grand military spectacle entitled "Le Bivouac."

Anon came the ballets respectively entitled "Cupid," "Dresdina," "The Seasons," "Nadia," "Algeria," "Enchantment," "Antiope," "Ideala," "Irene," "Our Army and Navy" (an enlarged version of "Le Bivouac"), "Asmodeus," "Astrea," "Zanella," and "The Sleeping Beauty." All these ballets (with, we think, one exception) were composed by the indefatigable M. Jacobi.

It should be mentioned that during these later Alhambra years of Morton's, he also introduced there among his variety turns such leading favourites as Marie Loftus (the still brilliant and brainy mother of "Cissy" who now, as a serious actress, calls herself "Cecilia"), G. H. (otherwise the "great") Macdermott; that artistic male impersonator, Vesta Tilley; the late Fred Albert (first of the modern topical songsters); the late Jolly Nash; Marie Gilchrist (the skipping rope dancing sister of the hereinbefore-mentioned Countess of Orkney); Lottie Collins (later associated with that strange dancing ditty, "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay"); Trewey the shadowgraphist; Dan Leno (then making his name); the brothers Griffiths (with their side-splitting Blondin Donkey); the still alert J. W. (or "Over") Rowley; Leo Stormont, the powerful baritone; the two Macs. (first of the latter-day "cross-talk" knockabouts); the wondrous Hanlon-Voltas; the saucy sisters Leamar; Charles Bertram, the still unrivalled card-conjuror; Chirgwin, the white-eyed black-faced entertainer; the marvellous Cragg troupe; that lovely wire-walking damsel, the beautiful Geraldine; the incomparable Paul Cinquevalli; Billie Barlow (then not long from the Gaiety burlesques); Vanoni, the French-Canadian chanteuse (who afterwards made success in comic opera at the Avenue); poor Arthur Corney, the clever little comedian (brother of Pitcher, of "The Pink 'Un"); Harry Randall; Marie Lloyd, then beginning to "Wink the other Eye"; James Fawn, who some twenty years earlier had been first low comedian at the "Vic."; Sandow the Strong

Man (then new to England); the merry sisters Georgina and Jessie Preston; F. H. Celli, the late popular baritone brother of Herbert Standing; the still fascinating Florrie Robina; the ditto ditto Lily Burnand; Florrie Leybourne (daughter of George Leybourne, and wife of that versatile character-comedian, Albert Chevalier); and Jenny Hill, who was quite a female Chevalier in her way.

Mr. Morton was also quite remarkable for the extensive number of leading ballet stars, whom he caused to terpsichoreanly scintillate at the Alhambra. Among these were Mdles. Palladino, Sampietro, Marie, Lillie Lee, Thurgate, Bessone, Zozo, Zallio, Paris, Cormani, Spotti, Lorenz, Galeotti, Legnani, Saracco, and Pertoldi, and a wonderful male dancer named Signor Vicenti.



CHAPTER XLV.

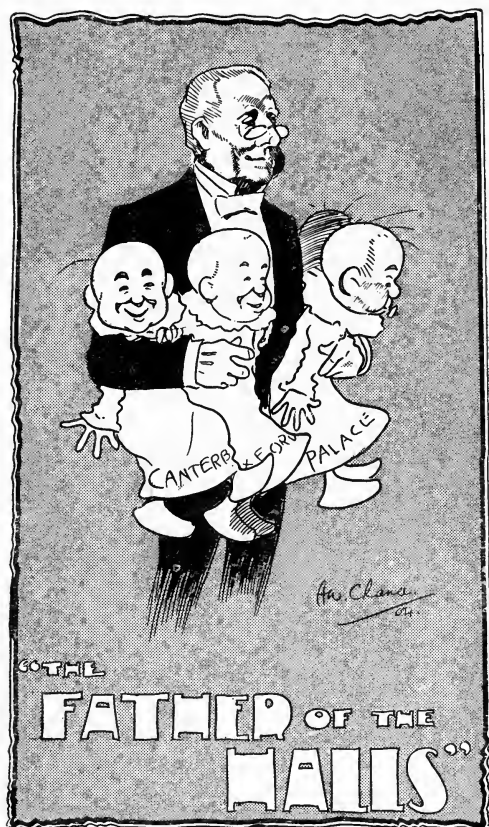
MORTON'S NEXT MOVE.

After Manager Morton had put in eleven years of hard work, morning, noon, and night, at the Alhambra, giving the finest productions of the kind ever seen in England, and producing fine balance-sheets time after time, the then over-anxious, not to say fussy, directors of that great amusement temple arrived at a strange decision. This was that he was too old to work any longer! That was in the year 1890—fifteen years ago—yet that veteran still went on working for fifteen years longer. Those Alhambra directors were good enough, however, to propose to give the “veteran” a small annuity; not so much, perhaps, to provide for his “support” as to prevent him from “bobbing” up managerially anywhere else.

A great matinée not only fitly terminated Charles Morton's triumphant eleven years' career at the Alhambra, but it was also remarkable for the fact that it was on this occasion that the venerable manager was first called the “Father of the Halls.” This since honoured and universally accepted designation was applied to him in the following address, cleverly written by the late Mr. Clement Scott, and finely declaimed by Mr. Charles Warner:—

Charles Morton! Listen now, and understand,
Not for myself alone, I clasp your hand.
To-day Love's messenger in me attends,
From tried companions, and from troops of friends,
Who bid me raise a sympathetic cheer,
To crown your life's work and unstained career.

Gladly, to-day, old friend, we scan the page
Of earnest manhood, honourable age;
Grieve not that work is over, but reflect,
Your silvered head has earned profound respect.



Long years ago, ere some of us were born,
Vice and vulgarity you held to scorn.
Bravely in days of darkness you took part
To free Amusement, and unfetter Art.
Old musty law you fought, 'twas your delight
To welcome Sweetness, and encourage Light.

Ah ! Who shall say what costly risks you ran,
To give sweet music to the working man.
For Hollingshead records—good honest John !
The cry was " Morton, charge !" " On, Stanley, on !"
You brought, when tastes were coarse and pleasures harsh,
The Canterbury Belle to Lambeth Marsh.
For pure amusement found a classic seat,
Founding an " Oxford " in a London street.
Seduced the people from their pot-house ways,
Maintaining pipes can't poison little plays.
And preached the freedom that has come to pass,
Now music's wedded to the cheerful glass.
'Twas you proclaimed the wisdom to us all,
How stale Protection killed the Music Hall.

For this life's service you have earned right well
A rest from toil—of pause a long last spell.
Put up your sword, old friend, let battles cease,
You fought for freedom, now depart in peace.
But ere night closes on the busy day,
Just one thing more I'm authorised to say.

Charles Morton, kneel ! I knight you ! Rise ! you can—
" Father of Music Halls," and " Grand Old Man !"



CHAPTER XLVI.

MORTON AGAIN IN THE STRAND—SOME STORIES OF HIS STARS.

Shortly after his retirement from the Alhambra, Mr. Morton was offered the Metropolitan Music Hall in the Edgware-road, but, not wishing to risk his hard-earned savings on any other venture of his own, he declined, adding that, just now, like Banquo's Ghost, he had "no speculation in his eye." Presently, however, Mr. George Adney Payne came along with his newly-acquired Tivoli, which had up to then been a failure. He offered the management of this new hall to Morton, who, thinking the site a splendid one, and that he might, by the exercise of his usual tact, make the place a success, accepted the offer, and started there on July 4th, 1891. As everybody who knows anything about the variety world has long since known, Morton speedily transformed the Tivoli failure into the Tivoli triumph. He achieved this happy result by working night and day, by stinting no pains whatsoever, and by presenting a thoroughly up-to-date entertainment. The new Tivoli's new manager would not be satisfied until he had (as was his wont) engaged the best of all available variety favourites.

By way of proof of this we may mention the following artistes:—Albert Chevalier, who made his first variety debut here at this period; Lydia Yeamans, the sweet-voiced American ballad singer; Dutch Daly, with the same old concertina and the same old comic wheezes; and Miss Ada Reeve, then described as a "serio-comic and dancer," and afterwards one of Mr. Morton's three-figure salaried stars at the Palace Theatre.

Some who were among the other stars at the Tivoli have since joined the great majority. Among the most popular

of these were the following :---Jenny Hill, the cleverest of all cockney comedians, an artiste who has not yet been replaced; Bessie Bellwood, who was saucier even than Jenny, and quite as cockney, though not so clever—certainly not so versatile; George Beauchamp, quite as cockney, and quite as comic, but not so versatile as either Jenny or Bessie; and Charles Godfrey, whose early acting experience, although mostly gained in the East-end of London, afterwards stood him in such good stead in the West-end halls.

The brilliant and brainy Jenny Hill made her earliest public appearance when she was a mere child at one of the few remaining "saloons" once so numerous in the suburbs of London. By the time Jenny made her debut (as a "goose" in a pantomime of Mr. J. Arnold Cave's) most of these "saloons" had either disappeared, or had been converted into "theatres." Among the saloons thus transformed were the Eagle, the Albert, close by in Shepherdess Walk, the Britannia in Hoxton, and the Effingham. Since then other changes of a more or less curious nature have occurred in connection with these resorts. The Eagle, afterwards the long celebrated Grecian theatre, was for many years a Salvation Army barracks. The Albert was made into a huge drill hall for Volunteers. The Britannia, which became such a famous gold-mine of a cheap playhouse under the late Mrs. Sara Lane, recently became a variety show on the two-houses-a-night system. As for the Effingham, that subsequently was renamed the East London Theatre, and after many more or less strange vicissitudes, it blossomed forth as the now enormously popular, but strange resort, known as "Wonderland." It is the abode of all sorts of extraordinary Yiddish, variety, and side-shows; and often of still more extraordinary pugilistic exhibitions which are hugely enjoyed by East-end lovers of "the fancy." It is quite an experience to see how the "Wonderland" manager, Mr. Jack Woolf, contrives to keep his heterogeneous crowds in

something like order, and how the said crowds manage to soothe their excited feelings—especially between the boxing bouts—with frequent supplies of “jellied eels.” And, of course, other “refreshments.”



CHAPTER XLVII.

MORE ABOUT EARLY TIVOLI STARS.

One of Morton's big Tivoli stars was Jenny Hill, much of whose ability has descended to her dashing and popular daughter, Miss Peggy Pryde. Jenny had been working for some twenty years ere she really gained that reputation which she had long before deserved. It was not until she was provided with such lyrics of low life as "I've been a good Woman to You" and "He's out on the Fuddle" that she began to find proper opportunity for the exploitation of her undoubtedly rich humour, which she expressed with a vivacity and a volubility that always set the audience in a roar. Moreover, it was not for some years after this comic singing time that little Jenny had an opportunity of showing that, like all true comedians, she possessed the gift of domestic pathos in a very marked degree. Few more pathetic impersonations have ever been seen on the theatrical or the variety stage than Jenny Hill's Crossing Sweepers, London Waifs, and little Stowaways. In this combination of comic and tragic power she had perhaps only one rival at that time, and that was the late little genius, Nellie Farren.

Stage folk are ever generous and benovolent, and lively Jenny Hill, who was so long an invalid before she died at a comparatively early age, was, indeed, a true friend and helper to many a poverty-stricken pro., even at a time when she herself was almost as poor. Also, like many of her profession, she had her little foibles. One of these was a consuming fondness for domestic display, whereby, like a certain other (but, happily, still surviving) cockney-soubrette, she delighted to see around her the most ornate of household gods, and especially to arrange for her guests and visitors to be received by the most gorgeously garbed

"menials." Indeed, quaint little Dan Leno (who, died, alas, as this chapter was being corrected) has often been heard to state that Jenny would never have even her beloved winkles handed around except on a silver salver!

Poor Jenny! She had known what it was to rough it—if ever woman did. She was not in her teens when she started her first singing engagement at a Fleet-street "free and easy," which is now the Albert Club—so beloved of sportsmen. Immediately afterwards she was "apprenticed to a Bradford bung," for whom she was a kind of combination "serio" and barmaid!

Poor Bessie Bellwood, who was Jenny Hill's rival in the comic-cockney sense, also had her little eccentricities. One of these took the form of telling stories that showed a tendency to verge upon what Arthur Roberts would call "Near-the-knuckleness." Another was a fondness for mixing with a certain class of aristocratic society, some members of which certainly helped her to squander her fairly large salaries even more foolishly than she otherwise would have done. Moreover, like many another member of her profession, Bessie was extremely superstitious, and was in the habit of carrying about with her all sorts of charms and amulets, such as tiny pigs, miniature gold beans, little silver horseshoes, and sundry kinds of microscopic idols, in order to bring her luck. Yet so generous was she withal, that she was often known to part with most of these precious talismans, even in one evening, to brother and sister artistes who chanced for the moment to be unfortunate in business.

The most popular of Bessie Bellwood's lyrics were "Wot cher, 'Ria!" and that cleverly penned "London Journal"-ise satire "Aubrey Plantagenet," written by the late wayward wag, W. F. Goldberg, alias "The Shifter."

Bessie started wage-earning in her very early childhood as what she used to call a "rabbit puller." That is to say she worked for certain tanners and furriers in the more or less salubrious district of Bermondsey. It was in her

early teens that La Bellwood, disguising her real name, Mahoney, made her first appearance on any stage at a "friendly lead" in Borough Market. She was fond of relating that she started there with a sentimental ballad, but speedily finding that that sort of thing wasn't her forte, she soon "verted" to the serio-comic line. Into her lyrics of this time she ere long began to introduce a considerable amount of "patter." It was this kind of talk so largely intermixed with the very latest slang, and punctuated, so to speak, with very saucy impromptus directed at certain members of the audience, that made Bessie Bellwood for some years one of the most popular of music hall stars.

Utterly unhaughty as La Bellwood was, she was very proud of one thing, namely, that she was a descendant of the Rev. Francis Mahoney, who was so celebrated under his pen-name of "Father Prout," and as being the author of such widely contrasted lyrics as "The Bells of Shandon" and "Charming Judy Callaghan." Whatever this relationship may have been, certain it is that Miss Mahoney, alias Bellwood, had inherited a considerable amount of that gifted Irish poet's humour. A striking example of wayward Bessie's deep sympathy and self-sacrifice was shown by the fact that when a certain nobly born, but not too nobly behaved, friend, who had been anything but beneficial to her interests, lay ill, and was about to die, Bessie, although herself then "going down," as the saying is, and in anything but good health herself, disbursed a great part of her earnings, not only for medical attendance, upon his lordship, but also for prayers and masses to be said for him by the priests of her own communion, which was the Roman Catholic.

And now for a few reminiscences of the erratic male members of the above-named quartette of departed Tivoli favourites.

One of the most eccentric of the Tivoli's departed male "Stars" was Charles Godfrey. Poor Charlie, whose real front name was Paul and whose proper surname was

Lacey, yearned for tragic honours in his teens. To that end he became associated with sundry East-end playhouses—notably the Pavilion, Mile End, where for some few years he played all sorts of minor characters, of course, for an appropriately minor wage. It was here, however, under the experienced managerial eye of the still-surviving veteran, Isaac Cohen, that Charles Godfrey learnt enough acting to be of great service to him, when ere long he 'verted to the Variety Stage. He started thereon with one or two "masher" songs and character-ditties which became highly popular—thanks in a great measure to his very strong acting and his really striking costumes. Perhaps because he found that his voice and method were better suited to declamatory work than to actual singing, Godfrey very soon struck a capital idea for introduction in the halls. This took the form of a dramatic sketch, or "scena," sometimes given as a monologue and sometimes as a miniature melodrama. His series of these often very successful histrionic morceaux commenced with "On Guard," which he started at a then popular but not too refined variety temple in Liverpool. In due course this clever if somewhat ebullient comedian, produced on the London and suburban variety stages quite a large number of these often effective scenas. In so doing he gave a long list of popular impersonations of such diverse characters as starving Balaclava heroes, octogenarian Chelsea pensioners, down-at-heel swells, warriors of mediæval fame, dauntless British sea-dogs, and so forth.

"Your humble servant Charlie Godfrey"—as he always styled himself when returning thanks for a "call"—became one of the most widely popular of variety stars. There were several reasons for this popularity, one was that his method of acting, although, probably, it would not have gained him great renown in the higher class drama, had just that "straight-from-the-shoulder" method which told immensely on music hall audiences who had not for many years been regaled with such definite dramatic fare.

Another reason was that the material provided for this hard worker was often excellently put together, especially by certain of his librettists and lyric writers, including Messrs. Cayley Calvert, John P. Harrington, Joseph Tabrar, Denham Harrison, and Charlie's own pet composer and inseparable companion, George Le Brunn.

Among other reasons for Godfrey's undoubted hold upon the music hall public it may be mentioned that, notwithstanding that over-wrought "Bohemianism"—which killed him at an early age as it has killed so many others—he always spent a considerable amount of thought and labour in the preparation even of the smallest of his songs and sketches. The present writers have found Godfrey from time to time at his charming villa at Brixton, surrounded by all sorts of books of reference, of which he had acquired a large number of valuable specimens. These he would consult most minutely for the working out of the details for his stage props—his scene—cloths, his supers, his costumes and his make-up. Moreover, he would just as diligently rehearse and re-rehearse these ten or fifteen minute "turns" of his until he thought them worthy of public presentation. His popularity, too, among his professional comrades was unbounded, not only because of his lavish "treat-standing" and things of that sort, but also because he was singularly free from professional jealousy.

Like so many of his profession, however, poor Charlie, of course, was often victimised by the unworthy and the unworking. This, together with his heavy expenditure day and night, and that fondness for display which was one of his little foibles, soon dissipated the fine salaries which he had for some years earned. For a long time it was customary for him to take his hundred pounds or more a week from his two or three halls a night. The usual result set in, namely, impaired health, with a voice to match. Presently he was fain to seek physical rehabilitation in Australia, where he was very soon reported dead. Hardly had his obituary notices appeared, however, before the

cheery Charles turned up again in London. For a while he again sought and won the suffrages of metropolitan music hall goers. But it was evident that, to use his own expression, "his number was up." Not long after, poor Charlie, one of the biggest idols variety land ever had, and a really loveable fellow to boot, died while on tour in the Midlands. He was buried in the locality, where for some time his grave was left in a very neglected state.

There was one habit poor Godfrey had—and was not alone in possessing—and that was the habit of performing the daily "drink crawl." Being of a more than usually sociable disposition, and disposed to "stand treat" to all and sundry, of course he had many companions in this tavern-sampling. As several of these boon-associates, although they manfully drank their share (and perhaps a bit over) have nevertheless outlived poor Charlie, it would, of course, be somewhat unwise to mention their names. You see, they might use it as an advertisement.

But one thing was always occurring in consequence of Godfrey and Co.'s public-house peregrinations, and that was that he was continually leaving his scripts or his music behind him at some hostelry or other. Thus, it often happened, that by the time Charlie reached his first hall of a night and had pulled himself together sufficiently to make a start, it was found that his score and his band-parts were non est. Hence, all sorts of messages had to be despatched to this or that tavern, the calling at which he might chance to remember, in order to trace the missing manuscripts. Thus, apologies for delay, and even the putting on of "deputies" pro tem., had to be resorted to until one or other of the messengers returned with the lost property or until some benevolent-minded Boniface who had found it kindly sent it along.

Another very eccentric but otherwise estimable fellow, was the aforesaid George Beauchamp, who also died at a very early age in the Midlands a few years ago. This really droll comic-singer, who had the funniest of faces, was pri-

vately named Patrick Sarsfield Beauchamp, and he began life as a compositor. He was always rather proud of this ; and even when a little later, thanks to his comic-singing prosperity, gigantic diamond rings would blaze on his obviously "rude mechanical" hands, he would in club or pub, cheerily tell all sorts of anecdotes of his experiences and adventures at "case."

But, notwithstanding the mostly gentle George's pride in what he regarded as his "humble beginnings," there were times when he would yearn to pose as what he was wont to call the "swaggerest of swells." It was during such a yearning-time as this that one Sunday night Beauchamp was inveigled by that often unselfish, but also mostly unsober, humorist, "the Shifter" (the late W. F. Goldberg), and a few other choice spirits to that wildest of night haunts, the now extinct Pelican Club. Knowing that Beauchamp—like the Lowther Arcade doll of which poor Fred Leslie used to sing—"pined for Higher Society," they, on reaching the Pelican, pretended that every member to whom they introduced him was somebody of title, or of enormous social influence.

Presently, as these titled "Pelicans" fluttered around intent on their own pleasures, Beauchamp's introducer fastened upon a member who since "Church time" that evening had been sleeping off, on an adjacent settee, some of the effects of his early dissipation of the day. This was a fine, handsome young fellow who, at that time—but not for long afterwards,—always seemed to have plenty of money for the backing of horses or—what is nearly as dangerous—the backing of theatres. Rousing this somnolent member, the "Shifter" and Co., after some difficulty, made him understand that he had to play the part of a Noble Lord to Guest Beauchamp.

Perhaps because the awakened Pelican was a scion of a family of brewers (where so many of our newer Peers come from) he quickly adopted a high-toney manner that

at first staggered poor George into speechless admiration. Soon, however, the pretended noble—who always had the bump of sarcasm rather fully developed—began to say things that rather grated on George. In due course, becoming more irritated, he exclaimed:—

“Look here, my lord, it seems to me that you’re going a bit too far. You’re laughing at *me*, that’s what *you* are! I don’t think you quite know who *I am*!”

“I *do* know who you are!” haughtily replied the still semi-fuddled Pelican. “You are a comic singer, and I have *never* laughed at you!”



CHAPTER XLVIII.

MORTON'S LAST MANAGERIAL "PITCH."

Owing to the enormous success made by the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas at the Savoy the late Mr. D'Oyly Carte, yearning, like a theatrical Alexander, for more professional worlds to conquer, bethought him of building a new and beautiful home for opera. In due course he carried out this wish of his managerial heart, and presented to the public that splendid and costly building, the Royal English Opera House in Shaftesbury Avenue.

For this wonderfully equipped and be-marbled theatre Mr. Carte secured the best available English Opera singers. Indeed, he engaged three companies for the same piece, and the leading stars were as follows:—Messrs. Norman Salmond, Richard Green, Eugene Oudin, Charles Kenningham, Adams Owen, Frangcon Davies, Avon Saxon, Ben Davies, Charles Copland, W. H. Stephens, F. Bovill, Francois Noijé, W. H. Burgon, and Joseph O'Mara, Mesdames Lucille Hill, Esther Palliser, Marie Groebl, Miss Thudichum, and Margaret Macintyre. These renowned vocalists appeared successively (and successfully as far as they were concerned) in "Ivanhoe," specially composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan; and in that brilliant and spirited opera "La Basoche," composed by Messenger. Not only were these operas powerfully cast, but they were "produced" by that richly experienced stage manager, Mr. Hugh Moss, in the most beautiful and picturesque manner.

But alas! in spite of all the thought, labour, and cost involved, the public, with that strange fickleness which it so often betrays in such cases, stayed away in its thousands. The result was financial failure of the direst description.

In due course Mr. Carte, a man not easy to discourage

or to baffle, was compelled to "throw up the sponge," as the saying is. He passed his magnificent Opera House over to the late Sir Augustus Harris and Co., who re-named it the Palace Theatre and started it as a variety show. Sir Augustus's opening programme consisted of "The Sleeper Awakened," a burletta by Richard-Henry—the Richard being Mr. Richard Butler, Editor of *The Referee*—and the Henry being Mr. William Morton's collaborator in these pages. There was also a capital up-to-date ballet written by Mr. Cecil Raleigh, and composed by the late M. Gaston Serpette. These three dramatic, operatic, and terpsichorean items were sandwiched with many of the very best variety turns then available.

Charles Morton in due course took over the Palace Theatre. Eschewing the heavier kind of variety and theatrical fare which Sir Augustus Harris and Co. had produced at the Palace after Mr. D'Oyly Carte retired therefrom, the new manager found means to present programmes of extraordinary diversity. In addition to engaging many of the leading variety stars such as have been mentioned with regard to the Tivoli, etc., he also secured many a distinguished singer who had hitherto confined his, or her, services to the concert platform. In due course, Morton added to the Palace programme a series of very beautiful and very striking *tableaux vivants*, which became the talk of London.

For purposes of reference it may here be mentioned that Mr. Morton's opening programme at the Palace consisted of the following features: "A Pal o' Archie's," a "Pagliacci" skit written by the late Sir Augustus Harris and Mr. Charles Brookfield, with music by Mr. J. M. Glover, who subsequently became musical director of Drury Lane; and a pantomime ballet called "Scaramouche," with music principally provided by M. André Messager. The principal variety turns of the Palace's opening bill were submitted by a peculiar French troupe called Les Edouard-Monition, who gave a Parisian wordless play

representing that famous old French beggar resort "Le Cour des Miracles"—so strikingly used in Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame"; also by Miss Florrie Leybourne, who retired from the stage on her marriage with Mr. Albert Chevalier; the Poluskis, Miss Vesta Victoria (then beginning to be very popular); the comical French clown O'Gust; G. W. Hunter, the marvellous Craggs troupe, the late Marguerite Fish and her husband, Charles Warren; and Ryland and Golden, the last-named being George Fuller Golden, who has of late been such a high-salaried single turn at the Palace.

When it is added that the company in the plays aforementioned and in a short ballet entitled "The Spider and the Fly" included Misses Ada Blanche, Maggie Duggan, and E. Hoby, and also Signor Albertieri, and Messrs. Edward Lewis, H. C. Barry, etc., etc., it will be seen that the strongest possible company was secured for the opening programme, in connection with which the late Mr. Alfred Plumpton made his first appearance as musical director of the Palace. On Mr. Plumpton's lamented death his post as musical director was taken by Mr. Herman Finck, who has made the Palace orchestra even stronger than of yore.

Among the theatrical stars seen at the Palace at this time may be mentioned Mr. Lewis Waller, Mrs. Brown Potter, Mr. Albert Chevalier, who gave many special "recitals" here, Mrs. Bernard Beere, Mr. David Christie Murray, the brilliant lecturer and journalist; Miss Cissie Loftus, Miss Letty Lind, Mr. Harry Paulton, John F. Sheridan, Mdle. Palladino, Mdle. Anna Held (one of the most beautiful of chansonette-singing damsels); poor E. J. Lonnen, La Loie Fuller, the late Edward Righton, Mr. James Fernandez (in several of Mr. George R. Sims's most striking recitations), Miss Ada Colley (with her wondrous top notes), the wondrous Zæo, who used to be shot out of a cannon; Miss Fanny Brough, and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, who drew so much money for the Soldiers' Fund by her fine recital of Mr. Kipling's "Absent-Minded Beggar"—a poem not altogether worthy of his often volcanic genius.

Mrs. Tree, it must be remembered, gave her salary of £100 per week to the Soldiers' Fund.

Among other leading favourites who appeared at the Palace for Mr. Morton, either in the regular entertainments or at certain anniversaries or charity matinees, were: Miss Ellaline Terriss, Mr. Seymour Hicks, Miss Ida Rene, the late Alice Atherton, Miss Louie Freear, Cissie Loftus, Miss Edna May, Miss Evie Greene, Miss Isabel Jay, the late brilliant dancer, Miss Katie Seymour, Mr. Lionel Brough, Miss Mabel Love, Miss Lucy Clarke, John Le Hay, and the late lamented "King's Jester," Dan Leno, and the wondrous "Memory Man," Datas (who came to the Palace for one week and stopped for fifty-two!)

And few would have guessed while the dainty Ida René was thus nightly bidden to discourse, and was enchanting the respective ears of Palace patrons that almost every hour of the day and night, but the little while she was on the stage of an evening was spent in the most patient and devoted nursing of her sorely afflicted young husband, the late Mr. Willie Boisset, sometime a hard-working member of the side-splitting pantomime troupe of the same name. For years before he died poor Boisset suffered from heart disease and blindness! Yet neither from him nor from his distracted girl-wife did one ever hear a murmur. When the gentle sufferer was at last "called away" those who knew what the beautiful little Ida Réne—so long a nurse and bread-winner of her poor husband—had gone through, thanked God for the merciful release for her as well as for him!

Although the aforesaid Mr. Lionel Brough had been an intimate friend of Mr. Charles Morton and a regular habitué of his "Halls" from the old Canterbury onwards, he had never played in any variety theatre till he came to the Palace. He was quite surprised when the then veteran manager offered him an engagement at a fine salary to tell some of his popular "Stories" at the Palace. Brough went

for a fortnight and stayed a month. He could have stayed longer, but he was due to return to the theatre boards.

"Lal" Brough tells as an instance of Manager Morton's shrewdness, how that on he (B) asking him which "stories" he would like him to do, answered, "My dear Brough, I only want *one* sort, the best."

At the end of the first week "Lal" felt that he ought to vary his anecdotes, so as not to seem boresome. "There is no need," quoth Morton, "you talk as if we had the same audience every night!" "That shut me up," says Brough.

Mr. Morton often called to mind the time when the lively "Lal" (who is now sixty-eight, and looks forty-eight) was a more or less blushful bridegroom, and how, while on his honeymoon with the late universally beloved Mrs. "Lal," the happy pair were sight-seeing with a few friends, including the then newly-married Mr. and Mrs. (now Sir Squire and Lady) Bancroft, bride Brough saw a sight which astonished her. She was, as ever (like her husband) of a tender, sympathetic nature, but "Lal's" tenderness and sympathy were, of course, less apparent than in the case of his gentle helpmeet. The party was wandering on through the district of the Seven Churches of Glendalough, and on nearing St. Kevin's Shrine the young bride stood long mute with rapt and devout demeanour. Presently, without turning, she softly called, "Lionel, dear," to approach and to join in her rapture. There being no response, she anon looked round, and lo! here on one of the loveliest bits of Nature's green carpets (even in Ireland) was "Lal" standing on his head! "Lal," being a born athlete, has often been known to adopt this habit of expressing joy!

"Oh!" murmured the sweet young Mrs. Brough, as she regarded with horror her upside-down husband, with all his honeymoon money running out of his pockets, "I never *could* get dear Lionel to be romantic!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

Thus it will be seen that Manager Morton's Palace Company (like all his companies of the previous sixty years) contained no specimen of that strange kind known to America as "Chasers." For the benefit of those who may not know who "Chasers" are, it may be here mentioned that they are the *very worst kind* of artistes that can be engaged for money, and that they are used by the runners of the "Continuous Shows" to chase away, by their "awful turn," those patrons who, having a Gargantuan appetite for getting all they can "on the cheap"—show a desire to remain in the building from the first show at 10 a.m. to the last show at midnight. Some such patrons are often known to bring their day's provender, their knitting, etc., with them.

Mr. George Mozart—one of the hereinbefore-mentioned Mortonian artistes—tells a quaint story of a couple of English male duettists and sand-dancers, who, on making their long-looked-for debut in New York, "went" so shockingly that before they left the theatre they began to pack up so as to take the next boat back! To their great surprise, however, the manager of the "Continuous Show" dashed in and insisted upon giving them a year's engagement at a vast increase of salary! The startled couple did not know for some time that they proved to that manager the most successful "Chasers" he had ever known.

One of the brightest stars that ever scintillated at the Palace was Miss Ada Reeve, who, after starting there at a comparatively small salary (such as she had been receiving with Mr. Morton at the Tivoli), anon blossomed forth as a three-figure-salary turn there. This was just before the lively little lady started on her own account, touring with that cleverly-written comedy, "Winnie Brooke, Widow," by Mr. Malcolm Watson, the eagle-eyed dramatic critic, and

writer of the popular theatrical article, "The Drama of the Day," in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Miss Reeve started her stage career at a very tender age—yea, even before the "walking-on" age—for she was, in the East End Theatres, "carried on" in her babyhood to represent the more or less silent offspring of "betrayed" heroines, and so forth. By the time she could learn to speak, the intelligent little Ada was achieving quite a sheaf of histrionic laurels in such juvenile characters as "Your Little Eva" in that negro-classic, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and Willie Carlyle, who, in that enormously successful stop-gap, "East Lynne," dies without calling his mother "Mother."

It was after some years of persecuted child-playing and singing and dancing in pantomime (chiefly at the Pavilion Theatre, Mile End), that the saucy little Ada "went into the halls"—first as one of the Sisters Reeve and afterwards as "a single turn." Perhaps her most successful song at the Palace was the one with the refrain—

Oh! you men!
You're impossible—nine out of ten!

Strangely enough, this song, like sundry "sketches," was destined to bring Mr. Morton again into the Law Courts, for an injunction was served upon him for allowing Miss Reeve to sing this song. The audacious Ada was, however, equal to the occasion, for on the evening of the day on which she was "warned off" warbling "Oh, You Men!" she came out with a song concerning the other (and sweeter) sex. This ditty had the refrain—"Women! I ought to know them—for I'm one of them!"

Of course, one of the most startling, as well as most attractive, shows introduced by Mr. Morton at the Palace Theatre was the *Tableaux Vivants*. These Living Pictures were beautiful and faithful human realisations of many great and popular works by our leading painters, including Luke Fildes, Charles Sainton, Daniel Maclise, Robert Gibb, R.S.A., Alfred Glendening, Bourguereau, Kaemmerer, W.

J. O'Doherty, Caton Woodville, Waterhouse, John Gibson, R.A., and Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema.

These tableaux (posed by Mr. W. P. Dando), like the wonderfully realistic Bioscope pictures, afterwards introduced by Mr. Morton at the Palace—and still nightly brought up to date there—were wont to draw all sorts and conditions of the Best People. These included the late Duke of Cambridge, several leading Statesmen, British and Colonial, many a member of the Bench of Bishops, and the Prince of Wales of the period, now our Beloved, Peace-making King.

Speaking of the many artistes and other workers engaged by Mr. Morton, it is probable that never since the history of recreation began has one man employed six generations in a direct line ; yet this was achieved by this manager.

In 1842, when he first became a licensed victualler, he had about the place an old fellow seventy years of age, who did odd jobs, and was a very handy man. Call him Smith.

Smith was with Mr. Morton until his death in 1850. Smith's eldest son, who was a very able violinist, joined the first Canterbury orchestra shortly after that date ; he was then sixty-one, having been born in 1792, when his father was twenty-one years old.

The violinist had also married very young, and had at that time a married daughter of thirty-nine. She was engaged, at the father's instance, by Mr. Morton to sell programmes and look after the cleaners. This was in 1853 or 1854.

One day the programme-seller came to Morton and asked him if he would care to see her eighteen-year-old daughter dance ?

The Manager agreed, and was so pleased with the performance that he gave her an engagement there and then.

In 1858, this daughter, being then twenty-three, married ; and, in 1880-*her* daughter was engaged as a dancer, at about the same age as her mother had been taken on.

And recently, the daughter of the Alhambra danseuse, a

young lady of nineteen, has actually appeared at the Palace Theatre with great success.

Mr. Morton, therefore, employed six generations in one family, which is certainly unique enough to be worth recording.

Of one of the Palace's chief drolls, namely, Arthur Roberts, it may be amusing to relate a little anecdote which he tells against himself. It was at a time when Roberts was making all London ring with a certain wildly comical song of his, that he was tempted by the offer of a princely salary to make his first appearance in the provincial Music Halls. It so happened that his opening date in this connection was at a large Lancashire town, where the audiences were inclined to be ebullient, to put it mildly. On the Monday morning, the smiling Arthur turned up for a band rehearsal, giving, of course, among his numbers, this comic song, which had helped to solidify his fame, and to fill his pockets.

On coming to this number, however, the manager stopped him, and in the broadest possible form of the local accent, told Roberts that he mustn't sing that song at any price. The comedian, flabbergastedly, inquired the reason. "Oh," said the Manager, "So-and-So sang it here last week." "But," retorted Roberts, "that song is my property, and no one has any right to sing it but myself!"

"Can't help that," replied the Manager, "I say he sung it here last week, and that if *you* sing it, they'll *guy* you off the stage."

"But *why*?" asked the astounded Arthur. "Because," answered the Manager, "that there cove sang your song *on his head*, and *you* can't do *that*!"

The Manager's statement was perfectly true, and the singer who gave thus wonderful upside-down turn was the well-known nigger singer and dancer, Mr. Joe Lawrence, father of the charming Miss Vesta Victoria.

CHAPTER L.

MORE TRIBUTES.

Mr. Morton had also a faculty of drawing around him important poets, playwrights and (as a certain still-surviving satirist would say) "similar members of the dangerous classes."

Here, for example, is a celebrated address by the late distinguished critic and playwright, Mr. Clement Scott:—

ON MR. MORTON'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

Recited by Mrs. Beerbohm Tree.

What has he done for us, Grand Old Man ! In his Record of Eighty Years ?
He has fought for Liberty ! Planted Truth ! With trouble, maybe with
tears !

With its ebb and flow, the tide of life has "beached" him safe and sound,
But the struggle was tough, and the straits were sore, till his feet touched
solid ground.

His Harbour Light was a vista view of things as they ought to be,
"The Pleasures of England *should* be Pure, and Art it *must* be Free !"

He took with pluck, this parable up, at Duty's bugle call,
And swore he would lead to Paths of Peace the degenerate Music Hall !

Sixty or seventy years ago, in the days of the "drinking ken,"
The jokes they made, and the songs they sang, were sorrow to Englishmen,
If you doubt my word, take Thackeray down, and Colonel Newcome call
To tell you the tale of the days of "Ross," and the shudder at vile "Sam
Hall."

But he dreamed of the madrigal, Grand Old Man, and the English catch and
glee,

And murmured "Pleasure, it should be pure, and Art it must be free."
So he opened a "Sing-Song" bright and gay, Vice took to its heels and ran !
Said the women "Oh, Governor ! Let us in !" "You shall come," said the
Grand Old Man.

But the dogs in the manger scowled and snarled, as they gnawed Protection's bone !

You are giving the patient Public Bread ! For you here's a Paving Stone !
So they dug old Acts of Parliament up, and tinkled the legal bell,
And said " Dear Charles ! If you want the Law there's the Dock and Police Court Cell,

You have threatened our Privilege, Grand Old Man, with your rubbish of Purity,

The *Play's* the thing that the Law allows, so just climb down ! D'ye see !"

But the Grand Old Man still fought for Art, and the public so deserving,
And degenerate Dog in the Manger days collapsed with Henry Irving.

Then they left the Grand Old Man alone, safe planted, firm on feet.
And now, if they pine for nastiness, they must go down another street
They have swept it out of the Music Halls ; and Variety lifts her head
With the aid and fame of a Liberal Man, now the Dog in the Manger's dead !
So I ask a cheer for that Englishman—one more for his eighty years,
He has borne them bravely, borne them well, you will own when he appears,
Sunny of face, and snowy of head ! Of life he has still a span !
But wait one second, I won't be long, I'll fetch you the Grand Old Man !



THE PALACE THEATRE.



So unto others as you would be done by
Is the motto of the first who sang
"Wink the other eye"

Yours Sincerely
Marie Lloyd
16/2/03

CHAPTER LI.

LAW-BREAKER MORTON AGAIN ARRESTED.

In an early part of this veracious history it was recorded how Mr. Morton was proceeded against for having at his Canterbury Music Hall dared to produce an entertainment which was said to be a stage-play! For this he was, it will be remembered, fined £5 at the Lambeth Police Court. That was in the year 1855. At the end of 1903, forty-six years later, the veteran, and ever audacious, law-breaker was again made a victim of the still-existing anomalous state of things. The sketch objected against was, it will be remembered, a boiled-down version of the comic opera, entitled "La Toledad," which had just before been produced in its fuller theatrical form at the Kennington Theatre.

Mr. Morton, on being once more prosecuted at the instance of envious theatrical managers, manifested the same composure as he had displayed nearly half a century earlier. On being interviewed by a representative of *The Daily Telegraph*, he was asked what he had to say to the charge of having produced "plays in the meaning of the Act," at the Palace Theatre of Varieties?

"I am guilty," he replied. "Indeed, you may regard me as the Alpha and Omega of all the trouble. For me this is no new thing. As far back as the early 'fifties' I suffered a similar experience. At the Canterbury, I then produced a little sketch called 'Hodge-Podge,' in which two artistes only were concerned, the result being that I was hauled before the Lambeth magistrate, Mr. Norton, and fined £5 and costs. At that time I had a powerful organisation against me, including Ben Webster, Baldwin Buckstone, and other leading managers. You might fancy I profited by the lesson. Not at all. The desire to supply my patrons with novelties was, I suppose, too strong within me,

and two years later I was moved to repeat my offence by presenting, also at the Canterbury, 'The Enchanted Hash,' only to be again summoned and duly punished for my audacity.

"When I tell you that in 1872 I was at my old pranks again, you will doubtless write me down incorrigible. But so it fell out. On the latter occasion, I offered the public a selection of 'Chilperic' at the Philharmonic, Islington, and once more got myself rapped over the managerial knuckles for daring to do so. Still, the thin end of the wedge had been introduced into the breach, and as time gradually wore on theatrical managers, either from laziness or complacency, ceased to trouble themselves about our doings. And thus, eventually, the 'sketch' established itself upon the music-hall stage.

"Of course, it had no legal right to be there at all. The law resolutely refused to recognise its existence, and it only wanted some informer to call attention to its presence to have it immediately suppressed. But the public viewed the new comer with favour, and little by little, it grew in importance. Don't imagine for one moment that we, its sponsors, ever deceived ourselves as to the true position of affairs. We knew all along that the bantling was there purely on sufferance, and that at any instant its life might be brought to an untimely close. For the Act is as clear as its provisions are stringent. *A performance by any two men, singers or actors, constitutes a stage play, and can at once be put a stop to at a music hall.*"

Mr. Morton's candid and concise statement of the case does away with the need for giving in detail a very lengthy judgment that was hurled against him on this occasion. It is enough to add that the veteran culprit was declared (as he had confessed himself) guilty; whereupon Mr. Justice Denman fined Mr. Morton and the Palace License Holder, Mr. Ernest Polden, as representing the Palace Company, £10 for each of the few performances given of "La Toledad," making £50 in all. An amusing little episode

took place at Bow Street Police Court during the time that Mr. Charles Morton and Mr. Polden had to stand in the dock to answer a warrant for having performed stage plays at the Palace Theatre. Immediately behind the dock stood dear old John Hollingshead, whose distinguished appearance everyone in Court noticed. Next him was Miss Emily Soldene, and as the charges were read out against Mr. Charles Morton and Mr. Polden, Mr. John Hollingshead reached over and said, "It's all right, Governor, you have got some of the old guard behind you," meaning himself and Miss Emily Soldene. The personal summonses against Mr. Morton and Mr. Polden were withdrawn, but, as the merest newspaper reader knows, this vexed subject is still far from a proper, just, and reasonable settlement.

Indeed, even as this book is going to press the war between the Theatrical and Variety Managers is still raging. Since Mr. Morton's pronouncement, quoted above, the Theatrical Managers' Association have proceeded many times against their Variety Managerial brethren, who are represented by what is called the Proprietors of Entertainments' Association. From time to time well-wishing would-be peacemakers on both sides have endeavoured to pour oil upon troubled theatrical and variety waters. Moreover, Captain Jessel, who is quite an earnest Member of Parliament (as M.P.'s go nowadays), even went so far as to frame a Bill that should embody, in some sensible form the much-talked of but up to now never-arrived compromise. The jarring managers themselves have from time to time met each other in more or less solemn conclave, and there have been times when gentle peace seemed within measurable distance of the disputers.

Alas! all has been in vain, and what with fresh points of dispute bristling up, and fresh subjects of debate being laid down, and last, but not least, what with the Law's delay, of which poor Hamlet complained so bitterly, this miserable sketch-squabble seems as far off being settled as it did

when it was first re-started nearly five and twenty years ago by a body of theatrical managers, at the head of whom were the late George Conquest and the late Sir Augustus Harris. For the purposes of reference, however, in case a peaceful ending should ever be arrived at, it should be set forth in these pages that the Theatrical Managers' Association's latest concession to their variety brethren stipulated that they were willing to agree to music-hall managers playing sketches that should not exceed thirty minutes' duration, and that the dramatis personæ thereof should be limited to six principals and twenty supers. This concession was hailed with something akin to joy by the generals of the variety battalions, including Mr. Henri Gros as President, Mr. George Adney Payne, Mr. Henry Sutton, Mr. Henry Tozer, and other astute variety chiefs. For the theatrical side, Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Mr. George Alexander, hitherto very strong sketchophobes, also agreed that Peace should be arranged on these terms.

Unfortunately, however, some very officious person on the theatrical side wanted to insert a kind of amendment forbidding "anything in the nature of a sketch." As the inclusion of such a codicil would have prevented the performance of the most trivial duologue or even of a quick-change monologue, naturally objections at once arrived from the variety camp, and all the managerial fat was again in the theatrical and variety fire. And there it remains fizzling up to the moment of writing.



CHAPTER LII.

The sixty-five years' stage career of Mr. Charles Morton, including as it does the history of the rise and progress of the variety stage, together with much in the way of theatrical chronicling—came to an end on August 15th, 1904. This date was the eighty-fifth anniversary of this veteran manager's debut on the stage of life, and, as had been the case for his previous four or five birthdays, he held a grand reception at the Palace Theatre. To this reception came, as usual, troops of friends, both professional and private, and the presents, chiefly from artistes who had graduated in his service, and had for the most part since achieved renown, were almost as numerous as the congratulations verbal, written, telegraphic, and even telephonic. Many of the aforesaid congratulations again took a poetic form. The poets on this occasion included Mr. Eustace Baynes, Mr. Edgar Lee, Mr. Bernard Malcolm Ramsay, and those fiction-writing and financial twins who elect to be known as "Huan Mee." Towards the end of this eighty-fifth birthday celebration, "the Grand Old Man of the Music Halls," as all the leading papers of that date had described him, appeared upon the Palace stage to return thanks to All Concerned. He did not, however, appear in *propria persona*, but upon the Biograph, which he had helped to make so famous.

This proved to be the last portrait ever taken of Mr. Charles Morton, for just as we had ended our modest history with the preceding paragraph and were about to submit the page-proofs of the entire book to him, that veteran-manager, up till then hale and hearty, was seized with a severe illness. In the course of a week or so, his weakness increased so much, that he felt it only just to his directors and to the public, to resign the manage-



Photo Langfier.

MR. ALFRED BUTT (Manager, Palace Theatre).

ment of the Palace Theatre, which he had during his twelve years' rule made one of the most famous of amusement resorts in the whole entertainment world. A few days after Mr. Morton's resignation had been reluctantly accepted by the Palace directors, and the young but far-seeing Mr. Alfred Butt, who had for two years been assistant-manager, had been appointed sole manager, Charles Morton passed peacefully away in his eighty-sixth year, after nearly seventy years of continuous public service!

Although Mr. Morton was such a great age, and although his death reasonably might have been expected many years before, yet the news of his decease came almost as a shock to the whole theatrical and variety world. All the daily and weekly journals of London and the Provinces issued "appreciations" of this grand old pioneer of the variety stage, who had, indeed, as one of these notices happily remarked, turned the Music Hall from a Pot-house into a Palace. To quote from the aforesaid extensive appreciations, would be, in a large measure, only to recapitulate most of the memoranda in our preceding pages. One article, however, namely the *Daily Telegraph's* second notice concerning Mr. Morton's death, might well be quoted to some extent, as it touches on a side of that veteran's career not connected with the theatrical or variety stage. In point of fact, it throws some additional light upon the late Mr. Morton's sporting proclivities which we have indicated at the beginning of this book. We have there shown his great love for, and encouragement of, aquatic and field sports. This *Daily Telegraph* article, however, dealt in very interesting fashion with another of his varied pursuits. Here is an extract:—

Mr. Charles Morton was the "Last of the Listmen." The Betting Act of 1853 removed from the metropolis a system of betting upon horse-racing which undoubtedly gave rise to the greatest abuses. Originally started by two men named Drummond and Greville, it was brought to its height of notoriety by Davies, the book-maker, known as "the Leviathan," who commenced business at a public-house in the Strand. By the constant display of lists on licensed premises—at some of them such a small sum as sixpence was accepted—the old lottery evils were practically revived. Customers dropped in, drank and betted, and Davies himself died a very rich man, though he was acute enough when in the heyday of his prosperity to see that the game could not last for ever. Thus, in the October of 1852—it must be remembered that winter betting on the Derby was quite fashionable half a century ago—the threat of the Government to bring in a repressive Bill caused Davies to stop his Derby list for 1853. Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, had submitted the draft of the coming measure to him before anybody else saw it, and the "Leviathan," though he disapproved the Bill, immediately recognised the coming of the inevitable. In the Cesarewitch of 1852 the favourite was the late Tom Parr's "Weathergag," whose victory caused a veritable panic among the dishonest members of the list fraternity in London. We ought to mention that there were about 700 licensed premises exhibiting lists and taking bets over the counter, and the listmen had their "headquarters" in Long Acre, where betting offices pure and simple were kept open, and did a roaring trade. The rush upon "Weathergag" created a complete collapse among several prominent personages, who, of course, were utterly outside the pale of the law, and the day after the great Newmarket race numbers of the hard-hit listmen bolted.

Among those who conducted lists and met their obligations in an honourable manner were the late Mr. R. Bignell, afterwards identified with the Argyll Rooms—where the Trocadero now stands—and Mr. Charles Morton. The Argyll itself was then called "Laurent's Casino," and dancing commenced there at nine and concluded at half-past eleven. So extensively did the betting craze rage that clairvoyants entered into the business, and one, Alfred Milo, "the only person who foretold the winner of the Derby nine years in succession," advertised a positive "second-sight" certainty. "The shouts," he said, will be echoing across the Surrey downs that "Milo" is right again. The public were warned to keep off "Teddington." Having divined the winner of the Oaks as well, "Milo" kindly offered the "double" for three-and-sixpence and a stamped envelope, but when "Teddington" disobligingly won by two lengths faith in clairvoyance was severely shaken.

It was then possible to bet in the winter upon races six months or more ahead, and the entries for a race like the Chester Cup

numbered over 200, and were published in the aforesaid "lists" in December, so that the number of "long shots" a man could back were considerable. The Epsom Autumn Steeplechase was also a great betting race, but the "lists" were fast earning disfavour, mainly by reason of the dishonest practitioners often associated with them. At last Lord Palmerston (none too willingly) was moved to action, and the suppression of betting houses and lists, aimed at by Government measure, induced Mr. Apsley Pellatt to bring forward on the third reading a clause providing that every newspaper proprietor or editor giving information as to the result of a race should be fined £20 or sent to gaol for a month with hard labour!

This proposal having been ignominiously kicked out of doors, the Betting Bill of 1853 passed the House of Lords, obtained the Royal assent, and came into operation on December 1st. Except that an echo of it is sometimes revived by the insoluble controversy "What is a place?" the measure which abolished "listmen" would be an unknown quantity to the present generation. It disestablished Charles Morton more than fifty years ago, but the old man liked a bit of sport until the end of his days, and at Ascot he remained a familiar figure. With the "Father of the Music Halls" died the oldest and the "Last of the Listmen."

Mr. Morton's funeral was attended by every available theatrical and variety artist in London, and indeed many came hundreds of miles in order to be present. The family were overwhelmed with telegrams and letters, not only of sympathy, but in most cases expressing great love and affection for the dead manager. A great number of these stage favourites assisted a week or two later at a Grand Matinée which the Palace Directors had arranged to give Mr. Morton immediately after his resignation. It had been hoped that the veteran would have been spared to take his farewell of the public at this matinée, but he passed away while the arrangements were in progress. The aforesaid Palace Directors, including Messrs. T. E. Polden, J. L. Graydon, Eugene Cremetti, and Count Hollander, decided that the matinée should be given as a tribute of sympathy to their beloved manager's widow. A finer programme has seldom been seen on any stage, nor has a more representative audience ever been gathered together. A special

address had been prepared by Mr. Bernard Malcolm Ramsey, certain of whose Mortonian birthday odes have been mentioned in our earlier pages. Of this address it is perhaps sufficient to quote the postscript, which ran thus :—

“E'en as I greet you, lo ! Death's Angel calls ;
Hail and Farewell, dear ‘Father of the Halls.’”

Mr. Charles Morton's death, coming as it did while the final proofs of this book, originally ordered by himself, were passing through the press, caused considerable delay in the issuing of the volume. A great deal of more or less interesting material, which could have been retained while he was alive, had to be sacrificed for family and other reasons which need not be specified herein. In point of fact, a new edition of the book, much condensed, as well as much altered, had to be prepared by the compilers. This will account for the work not being published until some months after the death of him who had inspired and had passed the bulk of its chapters.

This being thus, we have thought that it would not be found utterly uninteresting if we were to gather up our own impressions of some of the strange transformations which have occurred in the evolution of the Music Hall, in its transition from Pot-house to Palace. Therefore, we beg respectfully to finish our modest labours with the following epilogue :—

* * * * *

EPILOGUE.

A PEEP AT PAST AND PRESENT.

The evolution of the modern music hall from the first Canterbury of the late Mr. Morton's days, fifty odd years ago, has, of course, been largely helped by other managers, most of whom were not born in the time when that afterwards fine hall was a mere tavern, and not too desirable a tavern either. The late Mr. Edwin Villiers, who in the late sixties succeeded Charles Morton and William Holland at the Canterbury, was at the time of that house's first transformation, acting in the West End theatres, where he had been one of the Great Macready's most promising "young men."

Led on by the example of the subject of these pages, sundry now leading managers, not more than thirty, and in some cases under twenty years ago, made great improvements in the music halls, both in London and in the Provinces. These shrewd enthusiasts included Mr. George Adney Payne; his sometime partner (the late Mr. Charles Spencer Crowder); Mr. Henri Gros; the aforesaid Mr. Villiers; Mr. James L. Graydon; the late Mr. H. J. Leslie (who made a fortune out of "Dorothy" and formulated the Tivoli); Mr. Henry Tozer, and the late Mr. Herbert Newson-Smith, who was instrumental in forming what is called the "Syndicate" group of halls. This group primarily comprised the London Pavilion, the Oxford, and the Tivoli. For some time, however, the "Pav." (as it is usually called by its patrons) has been out of that combine.

Still later there have arisen other wholesale variety managerial magnates as Mr. Oswald Stoll, Mr. Frank Macnaghton, Mr. Thomas Barasford, and Mr. H. E. Moss,

who between them run from fifty to sixty large variety houses.

Apart from the vast increase of the variety theatre industry, as one may call it, the improvement made in the halls themselves during the last quarter of a century is indeed striking, as a glance at a few districts will serve to prove.

Take the East and North East for example. For such old-fashioned publichouse kind of halls as Wilton's; the Alhambra, Shoreditch; MacDonald's in Hoxton; the "Eagle," Mile End Road; the two Apollos (at Poplar and Bethnal Green respectively); the Rodney at Whitechapel; the Orient, Poplar; the Regent, Mile End Road; Davey's at Stratford, and so forth--there are now such fine buildings as the Paragon (formerly the Mile End "Eagle"); the London Shoreditch; the Eastern Empire; the Walthamstow Palace; the Stratford Empire; the Hackney Empire; the Cambridge, etc., and as we write arrangements are being made for new Eastern "Palaces" at Ilford and Tottenham.

In the north, for such halls as Deacon's (which stood on the banks of the since covered New River facing old Sadler's Wells), and the first little Collins' we have now the Holloway and Islington Empires, the Euston, and the new and larger Collins'. Moreover, in the north Mr. Stoll has just started to build a huge Finsbury Park "Empire."

In the south, south-east, and south-west districts besides the Canterbury, there were only the old Salmon (afterwards called the Borough and Raglan), Lovejoy's at Peckham, the Parthenon at Greenwich; the Winchester (or "Grapes") in the Southwark Bridge-road; the Regent (off Vauxhall Bridge-road); the South-Eastern, in Tooley-street, the Sun and the Trevor at Knightsbridge; and the Old South London (formerly the site of a Roman Catholic church). For these there are now such fine variety theatres

as the Empress, Brixton; the Camberwell Palace; the Chelsea Palace; the Duchess, Balham; the New Cross Empire; the much improved South London Palace; and the recently transformed old Surrey Theatre. Now also "Palaces" and such like are threatened at Lewisham, Tooting, and Putney.

In the West End and Western suburbs the increase and improvement during the last five and twenty years have been still more marked. For the Swallow-street "Sing-Song" (off Regent-street) the quaint little Cosmetheka (in the Edgware-road); the Coal Hole (in the Strand); and Cyder Cellars (in Maiden Lane); the old and then not too purified "Pav.," and the then similar Alhambra, there are now the Coliseum; the Empire; the Improved Alhambra; the fine new London Pavilion; the ditto ditto Oxford; the Tivoli; the Hammersmith Palace; the Granville, Walham Green; the huge Metropolitan; the London Hippodrome; those much improved old-time halls, the Middlesex (once the "Mogul"), and the Standard, Pimlico; and that splendid building, the Palace Theatre.

Apart from the vast improvement from the pot-house character of the old-time halls, so the character of entertainment has been improved almost out of knowledge.

For example, the so-called "comic" songs of the last century's early seventies, and even the early eighties, often were of the most cerulean character—the tinge being really more ultramarine than azure. Even such otherwise deservedly popular stars as George Leybourne; the great Vance, not to mention certain still-surviving, but happily reformed, favourites, were wont to deviate into the broadest of song and the most vulgar of jest wherewith to tickle the ears of music hall groundlings. Such songs as Leybourne's "He's the man for me, my boys," and "If ever I cease to love"—especially the encore verses to these and several other of his ditties; and such flagrantly vulgar stuff as Vance's "Come to your Martha," would not now be

tolerated upon the variety stage—even although the London County Council might not be “looking.” In the “seventies,” and for some years before, the dirty ditties of the Pennikets, the Sharpes, and the Ross’s, and other truly comical comic singers, were made much of by the over-smoking and over-swilling music-hall audiences of the period. Thackeray’s well-remembered denunciation—by the mouth of Colonel Newcome—of Ross’s blasphemous and indecent song at the “Coal-Hole” (the site of the present Terry’s Theatre), was an outburst as remarkable as it was solitary in those days. No such song as that, and for the matter of that no such songs and duets as one used to hear at the old-time “Pav.,” would now be permitted by any variety manager. At least, not in London, although, unhappily, one may still find some very unclean songs and jests in certain of the provincial music-halls.

The songs of to-day are certainly in every way more respectable, and in many cases, quite as rollicking, as were the warbles of the aforesaid Bad Old Times. It must be confessed, however, that there were some very clever lyrics in the music halls of the “pothouse period.” Such ditties as Harry Clifton’s “Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green”; “Mary Ann of Camden Town; or The Blighted Gardener”; “The Veeping Viller,” and his capital “motto” songs, “Pulling Hard against the Stream,” “Always put your shoulder to the Wheel,” and “Wait for the Turn of the Tide,” would be hard to beat. The great Vance’s “Chickaleary Bloke,” “Costermonger Joe,” “Push along, keep moving,” and “Going to the Derby” (so long since sung by the agile J. W. Rowley), were cleverly-written songs, which in a great measure atoned for such “haw-haw” drivel as “Such Jolly Dogs are We,” “He’s a pal of mine,” and so forth. George Leybourne’s most foolish swell songs, such as “Champagne Charlie,” and other “rollicking” songs full of similar senseless “repeats,” could easily be forgiven for

such lyrics of this so called "mammoth comique" as "The Mouse-Trap Man," "The Lancashire Lass," "Up in a Balloon, Boys," "The Flying Trapeze," and other waggish warbles. Most of these songs of Leybourne's were set to very taking melodies, oftentimes adapted from a morceau of some favourite opera, polka, or waltz. Fred French, who, like Vance and Leybourne, had excellent comic acting powers, also had some excellent songs, chiefly of a character type. These included such popular lyrics as "Hanky Panky," "Sago Fum," "The Wreck off London Bridge" (one of the funniest songs ever written), and "When these old Clothes were New," a song in which French never failed to draw what a certain class of romantic writers call "the Pearly Fugitive."

The late George Ware, who, after a long spell of comic singing, either alone or with his wife, became a worthy music hall agent, known as the "Old Reliable," also sang and wrote many an excellent comic song, such as "The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue," "She'd a Dark and Rolling eye," "The Beauty of Brixton," "Pretty Jessie at the Railway Bar," etc. Ware had a nice taste in English poetry, and was an astute collector of books. For some years he was lyric provider to many of the "stars" of the period, such as the still surviving veteran Mackney, Harry Liston, the late Arthur Lloyd, and the recently deceased Annie Adams.

The said Miss Adams was an enormously popular serio from the early sixties to the late seventies, and had an extensive repertory of excellent comic and serio-comic songs, many of them being "ladies' versions," as they were then called. Many of these were written for her, and other serios of the time, by the late G. W. (or "Jingo") Hunt; the late Mr. Walter Burnot (who was fond of describing himself on his card as the "Drawing-Room Laureate"); the still-surviving old bard, Mr. Charles Merion, and the still hale and hearty Mr. E. V. Page, the well-known Variety

Manager, one of whose biggest lyric successes was poor Nellie Power's "Lah-di-dah."

The music to the most popular effusions of Vance's, Leybourne's, Liston's, Lloyd's, and other much-worshipped "comiques" of the time, was for the most part provided by late Frank Hall, himself an excellent comedian, Vincent Davies, the aforesaid "Jingo" Hunt, and Herr Louis Vonderfinck, father of the Mr. Herman Finck.

For securing good songs certainly the most fortunate comic singer of the earlier music hall period was the late Arthur Lloyd, an excellent comedian and vocalist, whose nearly fifty years' of service to the theatrical and variety stages finished only a year or two ago. Lloyd had a large budget of carols, mostly as melodious as they were merry. Music hall patrons of any pretensions to experience will still remember (and still be able to sing and to whistle) many of Arthur Lloyd's most popular songs, such as "Immensikoff," "Milking the Cocks and Hens," "Seringapatam," "Beef, Pork, and Mutton, won't you buy, buy, buy?" and "Take it, Bob." This last was a very quaint drunken ditty supposed to be sung by a very bibulous miller who fancies he hears his water-wheel, thus suggesting that he should absorb frequent liquid refreshment. It was, by the way, the singing of this Bacchanalian ballad that caused that long-locally celebrated South London Music Hall Chairman, known as "Baron" Courtney, to be addressed throughout the evening by the gallery boys as "Bob—Bob—Bob."

If nowadays we have not altogether such a number of really humorous songs as we had in the early days of the "halls," we have still had some very cleverly-written and well-composed specimens, especially as manufactured for the late Dan Leno, Mr. Gus Elen, Mr. George Robey, Mr. Harry Lauder, and Mr. Albert Chevalier, who, however, manufactures most of his own lyrics. "Chevvy's" chief composers have been the late Mr. Bond Andrews, and

those excellent surviving music providers, Mr. John Crook, Mr. Edward Jones, and Mr. A. H. West, who is, as it were, so closely associated of late years with Mr. Chevalier, that one could seldom say of either, as the lady in the fable said, on seeing the approach of one of two very inseparable friends—"Lor! here comes Fidus without his Achates!"

It has to be said also that although our modern music halls do not possess a Robert Glyndon (the Literary "Dust-man"); Waldron, of "Black Sal and Dusty Bob" fame); W. G. Ross (a really wonderful character-comic, although often offensive in the extreme); Jack Sharpe (a sort of cross between Arthur Roberts and poor Dan Leno); George Leybourne, Vance, and Jolly Nash, yet our variety stage of to-day can boast a large array of really excellent comedians, both of the masculine gender and of what the otherwise polite Mr. George Meredith calls the "Inexplicable Sex." While we have such able stars scintillating as Chevalier, Elen, Robey, Lauder, Charles Coborn, Malcolm Scott, George Lashwood, Vesta Tilley, Marie Loftus, Vesta Victoria, Nellie Wallace, Alec. Hurley, and Marie Lloyd, we cannot complain of lack of humorous artists. Moreover, the variety stage assuredly was never so lavishly supplied with all sorts of other clever and often wondrously expert "turns" as the gymnasts, the pantomimists, the ventriloquists, and other "ists" of these days.

To sum up, the once despised and often properly despised music halls of the Metropolis have become splendid variety theatres, worthy of (and often receiving) the patronage of the Highest in the Land.

FINIS.



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